HISTORY OF FREUCHIE U.P. CHURCH

E. Livingstone
Wellfield

THE HISTORY OF A HUNDRED YEARS.

PRINTERS
WESTWOOD
AND SON.
CUPAR-FIFE

Freuchie United Presbyterian Church

THE HISTORY

OF A

HUNDRED YEARS:

BEING THE

STORY OF FREUCHIE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

EDITED BY

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CUPAR-FIFE: A. WESTWOOD & SON.

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ERRATA.

Page 12, line 19, for "£73," read "£102 in the year 1792."
Page 56, line 17, for "Brechin," read "Forfar."

PREFACE.

THIS volume has been prepared in deference to a widely expressed desire that the history of the Congregation, and of the celebrations in connection with its Centenary, should be published as a memento of its one hundredth birthday. Fortunately for the carrying out of this purpose, the Session records are very complete, dating from Mr Richardson's ordination in 1798.

The Editor has to acknowledge his great indebtedness to the Rev. John Pollock, Glasgow, for granting the use of his MS. history of the Congregation for the first forty-five years, so thoroughly well done that, with the exception of a few necessary alterations in dates and names, it has been inserted as it left his hands. Chapters I. to VII. inclusive, Chapter VIII. to middle of page 55, Chapter IX. to page 61, and the latter half of Chapter XII., are from his pen. Thanks are also due to Mr William Richardson, London, for kindly furnishing the details, to be found in Chapter VIII., concerning the descendants of the first minister of Freuchie.

We send forth this volume in the hope that its perusal will prove instructive to every one who has truly at heart the advancement of those distinctive principles upon which the United Presbyterian Church is founded, and for which our forefathers suffered and contended.

U. P. MANSE,
FREUCHIE, November, 1896.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

THE village of Freuchie—or *Fruchie*, according to old spelling and local pronunciation—is beautifully situated at the foot of the Lomond Hills, in the very centre of "ye antient Kingdom of Fife," 20 miles (crow-fly) from Edinburgh, 17 from Dundee,* and 15 from Perth and St Andrews. An old gazetteer notices it as "a dirty village two miles from Falkland;" and doubtless the first part of the description was, at the time, as true as the second. And although it has lately been considerably improved in point of cleanliness and order, there is still much remaining to be done before it becomes, what it might easily be made, a favourite holiday resort. It is the best starting-point from which to ascend the East Lomond, which commands a view of the well-wooded Howe of Fife, surpassed in beauty by no inland mountain prospect in Scotland. The Royal Palace of Falkland, rich in historic associations, is within easy walking distance; and a little beyond, nestling between the East and West Lomonds, is the far-famed Maspie Den.

Freuchie is chiefly notorious as being one of the three places in the world to which disagreeable people are most usually desired to betake themselves, the other two being Banff and Jericho. The origin of the well-known phrase,

* Both Edinburgh and Dundee time-guns are frequently heard.

"GO TO FREUCHIE!"

—or, more correctly, "Ye may gang to Fruchie!"—is somewhat interesting, intimately connected as it is with court life at Falkland in the reign of James VI. There is an apocryphal legend to the effect that once upon a time a man of superlative wisdom resided in Freuchie, to whom it was customary to send the perplexed for advice. But the tradition which is generally accepted savours more of probability, besides being not without some authentication. The King's bursts of rage were frequent, but soon over; for "James First and Sixth" was, as a punning preacher dared to hint in the royal presence (James i. 6), "like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed." And so it was that, when the King's brows began to fall towards any of the circle of flatterers by whom he was surrounded, the companions of the luckless one shook their heads and said, "Ye may gang to Fruchie!" His stay there was long or short according to his master's mood; but he might safely calculate upon being restored to the favour of the fickle monarch, and to the superior comfort of the Palace, before many days were over.

HANDLOOM WEAVING.

It may be said of Freuchie, as of most other villages in Fife, that the chief industry long ago was handloom weaving. There was a considerable agricultural population in the surrounding district, and a few tradesmen and labourers in the village itself; but the large majority of the men of the village wielded the "pluck-stick." As a rule, the houses consisted of only two apartments—the one inhabited by the family, and the other occupied by the loom or looms by which the family was supported. It is generally admitted that the handloom weavers of last

generation were an intelligent class of men. Having ample opportunities for discussion, as well as for the perusal of the few books which came within their reach, they were inclined to bow to argument rather than to authority, and pinned their faith to no religious or political creed which did not commend itself to their reason. Consequently the number of quietly earnest men in the village has always been considerable, "dissent" continues strong, and Liberalism of an advanced type universal.*

THE LINEN FACTORIES.

The clatter of the handloom, which used to be heard from every house, is almost silent; indeed, there are now not a dozen lays in motion. Yet there is more cloth made to-day than was ever produced by all the looms in the village. The two linen factories employ between 300 and 400 hands, most of whom are women. Indeed, the change from handloom to powerloom weaving has caused a change in the population, for there is now little work for men; and lads on leaving school, or finishing their apprenticeship, are compelled to leave the village in search of employment. The total population at present is a little over 900, and the female portion is said to exceed the male by five to one.

EARLY "DISSENT."

We use the word *dissent* under protest, and for lack of a better. *Secession* would be preferable, were it not that it has a restricted significance, as referring to a particular denomination. So-called Presbyterian "dissenters" in Scotland are in reality neither dissenters nor noncon-

* At the Election in 1880 the *Scotsman* stated that there was *only* one Tory in Freuchie. The villagers received the information with surprise, and the *rara avis* has not yet been discovered. However, the split in the Liberal party in 1886 considerably increased the number of the Conservatives in the village.

formists, for they adhere to the standards of the Established Church in doctrine, government, and ritual. They do not therefore *dissent* from that church as a church: they have simply *seceded* from her as a State institution, or because they believe that she has *receded*. It was the moderates of last century — who sought to fasten the odious name of "dissenter" upon the lovers of the Gospel who retired from their ministry—to whom the name was most applicable.

Although there was, previous to 1794, no "dissenting" church—nor church of any kind—in Freuchie, the principle was not new. We have been unable to discover any trace of a "praying society" in the village such as formed the nucleus of other congregations around; but we may with all safety infer that members of some one of these societies, which existed in Fife from a very early period, belonged to Freuchie. The congregation whose history we write was not originated by any outside effort, but by the inhabitants themselves, in all probability the descendants of men who had turned their backs upon a degenerate Establishment. The rapid progress of the congregation during the first months of its existence, and even before a minister was secured, is sufficient evidence that there were many who either did not attend the Parish Church or were not unwilling to leave it. For the greater part of a century it was the only congregation in the village, and its history has been one of steady progress. For twenty years it has profited by the friendly rivalry of a branch of that church from which it has seceded but does not dissent, and we doubt not the profiting is mutual. The following pages are not intended—nor do we think them calculated—to stir up, foster, or revive a spirit of sectarian jealousy. But they will have been so far written in vain if they do not help to strengthen the devotion of United Presbyterians to the principles for which their fathers contended.

CHAPTER II.

FIRST BEGINNINGS.

OUR search after the origin of the congregation brings us to a kitchen fireside in the year 1793. William Scott, a handloom weaver, as were also his fathers, was precentor in the Burgher congregation of Leslie (now Trinity Church), and travelled there on horseback every Sabbath, a distance of five miles. Precentors in those days were not so highly paid as those who have entered into their labours. William's salary amounted to sixpence each Sabbath, which he received "in name of payment" for the stabling of his horse; and we suspect that the sum expended upon psalmody by the Leslie Burghers exceeded the average of the time.

"I wad as sune ha'e the saxpence without ridin' ower the hill for't," remarked Scott one Sabbath evening as he and half-a-dozen more of the men of the village sat round the fire, for his house was a favourite rendezvous. As the day had been stormy, the ride over the shoulder of the East Lomond was the reverse of pleasant; and those to whom he spoke could sympathise with him, for some of them had travelled the same road on foot.

"An' what's tae hinder us haein' preachin' for oorsel's?" said another, who had trudged through the rain all the way to Auchtermuchty (also five miles distant) and back.

"That's jist what I was hintin' at, man," replied the first speaker, "an' I'm glad ye've ta'en me up!"

PETITION TO THE PRESBYTERY.

The conversation which followed was the first of a series which issued about a year later in the formation of the congregation. On William Scott's kitchen table, in November or December, 1794, a petition to the Associate (Burgher) Presbytery of Perth was signed by 16 persons. The petition has not been preserved, but the tenor of it will be seen from the following extract from the first minute of Session:—

"The inhabitants of the village of Freuchie finding themselves at a considerable distance from any place of public worship, it occurred to a few of them that it would be of great importance to all the inhabitants, but particularly to the old people and children, to have the ordinances of the Gospel regularly dispensed among them. At the same time, they perceived that abuses had crept into the Established Church, on account of which they were much grieved, and which tended much to mar their edification, but which it was not in their power to reform. They therefore resolved to apply to the Associate Presbytery of Perth, which met there upon the 16th December, 1794, for one to be sent occasionally to preach unto them the everlasting Gospel of Jesus Christ."

The little company appointed two commissioners, Walter Lumsden and William Kay—Scott's son-in-law—to plead their cause before the Presbytery. They duly "compeared, and were fully heard;" and the Presbytery agreed to grant "sermon," but only provisionally, several families in the village and neighbourhood being members of the congregations of Auchtermuchty. As these congregations took an early opportunity of "expressing their cheerful con-

currence with the Presbytery in giving supply of sermon to the people in Freuchie," the day on which the petition was first granted—16th December, 1794—may be regarded as the birthday of the Secession cause in Freuchie.

THE FIRST SESSION.

At that time there was a great scarcity of preachers, and it was only occasionally that one could be sent to Freuchie. The place of meeting was by no means inviting, a half-ruined malt-barn * affording the only available accommodation. Nevertheless, the congregation increased so rapidly, by the accession of members of the Auchtermuchty and Leslie congregations, that in October of the following year a petition was presented craving moderation in an election of elders. The minute of Presbytery anent this petition reminds us of the fact that, with the exception of Dunfermline, at that time Perth was the only Burgher Presbytery north of the Forth; for alongside of the Freuchie petition there lay others from Aberdeen and Banchory. The day fixed for the election of elders was so stormy that the minister appointed to moderate found it impossible to "gang to Fruchie," and it was not till January, 1796, that it was reported to the Presbytery that elders had been ordained. The roll of this first Freuchie Session is not extant; but the following names appear in the minutes:—John Buck, † William Kay, James Lillie, and Walter Lumsden.

CHURCH-BUILDING LONG AGO.

Before the congregation had been four months in existence, indeed only six weeks after the concurrence of

* This building stood about twenty yards to the north-west of Mr Alex. Leishman's shop. It has long since disappeared.

† The first of three John Bucks—father, son, and son's son—who have sat in the Session. See appendix A.

the Auchtermuchty congregations, the sturdy Seceders set about the erection of a place of worship. There is no note of the date when the building was actually commenced; but on 17th April, 1795, the sum of £5 19s 9d was paid for "ground and rights." The days of laying the foundation stones of seceding churches with masonic honours had not yet come; but we doubt not a little group assembled to witness the beginning of the work, and who can tell how much the long-continued prosperity of the congregation has been due to the silent petitions which then rose to God? But, like the pious builders in Nehemiah's time, "the people had a mind to *work*" as well as pray; for there is a tradition to the effect that no mason's labourers were employed, the men of the village loading the scaffolding with stone and lime during their meal-hours. Surely lay and treadle went none the less cheerily when they returned to their looms! It is true that the "meason work" cost £17 2s, and the "scleatting" £7 4s; and that the total cost of the building, exclusive of site, was only £198 12s. But to measure these sums by modern standards would do a gross injustice to the representatives of secession in our village. There is in their example much for us to imitate; while at the same time the subsequent progress of the congregation leads us reverently to exclaim, "What hath God wrought!"

THE OLD CHURCH.

The "meeting-house" was ready for opening in December, 1796, but no record of that interesting event has been preserved. It must have been considered more than respectable at the time, and indeed it compared favourably with many churches built at a later date and by wealthier congregations. For nearly three-quarters of a century its walls resounded to the appeals of the Gospel,

and two ministers grew hoary in the service of succeeding generations. Yet it was not deserted because it showed any alarming signs of decay,* but because the congregation had outgrown its capacity. For several years more its plain exterior served only to enhance the beauty of the other churches which rose beside it, and when at last it was removed it was missed by many who never ceased to regard with interest the old relic of the bravery of bygone days. Yet it is not altogether gone; for we rejoice to think that its stones have been raised from the dust, and often again re-echo the sound of praise and prayer. It is most fitting that the sacred site should be occupied by such a building as now graces our village †—a building which, though its walls are mainly composed of the ancient materials, is more in harmony with modern taste, but which cannot be more highly honoured than by having proclaimed in it from time to time the same old Gospel which was "the glory of the former house."

PETITION FOR MODERATION.

The rapid increase of the Secession Church rendered necessary a frequent re-arrangement of Presbyteries, and in April, 1797, the congregation was transferred from Perth to Dunfermline Presbytery. Shortly afterwards they made choice of a minister, and applied for moderation in a call on 12th June. Owing, however, to the omission of proposals anent stipend, the petition was set aside, and the commissioners were instructed to table at next meeting of Presbytery a congregational minute stating

* When, some years ago, the roof of the new church was being repaired, and the roof of the old taken down, it was found that the old roof was in better condition than the new!

† A handsome public hall and reading-room, built and presented to the village by Mrs Thomas Lumsden in memory of her husband, who was for many years an elder in the congregation, and whose father was a member of the first Session.

the arrangements which the people were prepared to make for the support of their minister. When the Presbytery met at Lochgelly on 3rd July, it was stated that the congregation had agreed to offer £60 per annum as stipend, £5 for house rent, and £3 at the summer and £2 at the winter communions for expenses. Again the commissioners were compelled to return home disappointed; for "the Presbytery being of opinion that what they proposed to give was not a competency, nor according to their ability, a vote was stated, 'Grant the petition for moderation or delay?' and the roll being called, it carried 'Delay.'" The commissioners followed the Presbytery to Inverkeithing on the 31st of the same month, again presented their petition, and, in name of the congregation, "represented that what they had formerly offered for the support of their minister was as much as their circumstances warranted them to promise;" but the Presbytery thought otherwise, and a third time refused to grant their request.

REFERRED TO THE SYNOD.

Nothing daunted, the commissioners appeared at next meeting, which was held at Leslie on 7th August, "and requested that their former petition might be granted, stating that what they had formerly mentioned as stipend was as much as their funds would allow them to give." The Presbytery still delayed granting the petition, and "agreed to refer it to the Synod for advice: likeas they did thereby do. The commissioners at the bar were informed of said reference." Whether the matter was brought before the September Synod or not is uncertain. No mention of it appears in the Synod records, but these were not then so fully kept as they are now. Probably the matter was allowed to drop, "said reference" being

chiefly intended to lead the commissioners, and the congregation through them, to devise more liberal things.

GRANTED PROVISIONALLY.

The petition from Freuchie had been four times pressed within two months; but nearly seven months now elapsed before it was again presented. The Presbytery met at Buckhaven, in Mr Telford's house, in February, 1798: and at that meeting the commissioners (John Buck and William Grieve) stated that the congregation, at a meeting held on the 23rd, had yielded so far as to promise that if their present terms were accepted they would raise the stipend as soon as their circumstances would allow. The commissioners further expressed the hope that the congregation would agree to make an addition of £5 to what was specified in their minute. The Presbytery thereupon granted a moderation; but at the same time the commissioners were warned that the call was liable to be set aside, unless in a minute to be produced at next meeting the congregation should express their resolution to add £5 to the stipend.

CHAPTER III.

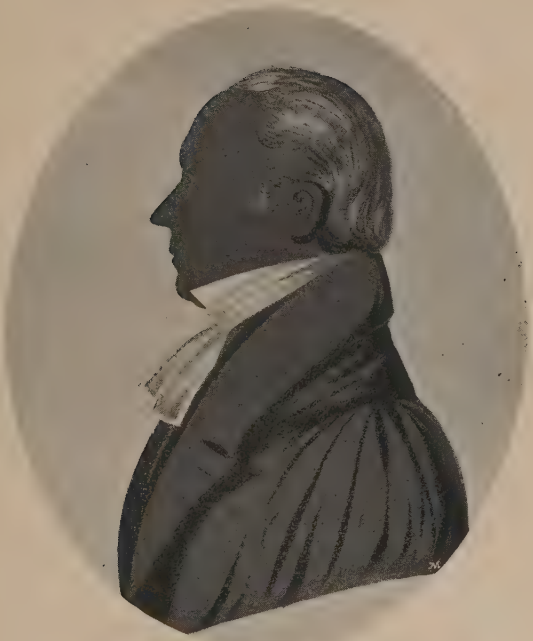
CALL AND ORDINATION.

THE congregation met for the purpose of calling their first minister on 3rd April, 1798. Notwithstanding the repeated rebuffs which they had received from the Presbytery, they were in excellent spirits. They had good reason to rejoice, for no sound of division was heard among them. Their hearts were fixed upon one man, Mr John Richardson, to whom they were prepared to give a unanimous call. The congregation must by this time have numbered considerably over a hundred members, for nearly that number signed the call —namely, 78 members and 20 adherents. The meeting cordially agreed to increase the proposed stipend to £65, and appointed a staff of collectors to raise annual subscriptions, in order to meet what they considered a heavy liability. And £65 did seem a large sum to men whose weekly earnings seldom exceeded 7s.* None of the seceding congregations around gave their minister much more, and even the stipend of their own parish minister was only about £73.

A COMPETING CALL.

The call to Mr Richardson was sustained, but the Presbytery could not put it into his hand, for he had also been called by another congregation, Newbigging, in Forfarshire.

* There were other three newly-formed Burgher congregations whose first ministers were ordained that same year, with stipends as follows:—Maybole, £60; Stonehouse, £60; and West Calder, £70.



Rev. John Richardson

At that time—and indeed till long after—a probationer was not permitted to decide between "competing calls," the rival claims of the congregations being brought before the Synod, and the matter settled there. Mr Richardson had no reason to regret the result in his case; but we cannot but think that the patience of the good people of Newbigging was unduly tried, for he was the first of *seven* whom that long-suffering congregation called during a vacancy of nineteen years! We may anticipate events by mentioning in this connection that the minister of Freuchie took a prominent part in the movement for the abolition of this absurd law. He and Mr Johnston of Leslie overtured the Synod in 1831 to leave probationers to decide for themselves with regard to competing calls; and in 1833, after much discussion and delay, the law was so far modified as to become practically a dead letter.

MR RICHARDSON'S ANTECEDENTS.

John Richardson was born at Lindzelands, in the parish of Biggar. His father was a small farmer, and an esteemed member of the North Congregation of Biggar, now Moatpark. Although not a son of the manse, perhaps his early desire to devote himself to the ministry is traceable to the fact that he was called by his parents after their beloved pastor, the Rev. John Low, who doubtless took no less interest in the boy on that account. After passing with credit through three schools, he entered Edinburgh University in 1787, where he specially distinguished himself in Natural Philosophy. In 1791 he entered upon the study of Theology, and for five years enjoyed the tuition of the celebrated Dr Lawson of Selkirk. While at the University he became a prominent member of several debating societies, particularly the Pantheon, which met in a large hall in Carrubber's Close. A gold medal was

annually awarded by this society for superior composition, and in 1793 young Richardson secured this much-coveted prize. While residing in Edinburgh—or rather in Leith —and till a few months before entering on trials for license, he was engaged in teaching a public school; and for several years he was also employed by the Edinburgh Gratis Sabbath School Society to take charge of one of their schools in Leith. He was encouraged in this good work, no less than in his studies, by the Rev. Thomas Aitchison of Leith, under whose ministry he had placed himself.

HARASSING DOUBTS.

"It pleased God, at the same time, to make use of other means of increasing his fitness for the faithful discharge of the pastoral office. Luther specifies *temptation* as one of the necessary qualifications for a useful minister, and the subject of this notice was no stranger to the assaults of the enemy. Possessing a mind constitutionally inquisitive and anxious to discern a solid ground for belief, and falling in with publications in which the truths of Christianity were either audaciously attacked or artfully undermined, he did waver for a season. This unhappy vacillation, however, led him to diligent, candid, and prayerful inquiry, and terminated in a firm and lasting conviction both of the divine origin of the Bible and of the unutterable importance and excellence of its grand distinguishing doctrines."

SEVERE AFFLICTION.

"Another painful expedient employed by the great Head of the Church to prepare him for public usefulness was severe affliction. During his residence in Leith he was oftener than once the subject of a severe rheumatic

fever, by which he was exceedingly enfeebled, and brought almost to the gates of death. On one of these occasions, in the summer of 1793, the impressions produced on his mind by his alarming illness were remarkably strong. To an intimate friend he expressed his apprehensions that, prior to this chastisement, he had never felt aright the importance of eternity, or the value of the Gospel. The visitation, if not the means of his conversion, was blessed unquestionably, in no inconsiderable degree, for increasing his acquaintance with himself and the Saviour." *

THE PROBATIONER.

Mr Richardson was licensed by the Presbytery of Edinburgh on 15th December, 1795. During the two years and a half of his probationary career he gained for himself the reputation of being an able preacher, and it is strange that he was allowed to remain so long "on the list." One congregation—Belmont Street, Aberdeen—would certainly have called him had they not resolved to secure, if possible, a man of some ministerial experience. As it was, he was honoured by some of the leading members of the congregation with gratifying marks of friendship. That he was highly worthy of the respect of all good men, as one who truly magnified his sacred office, is evident from the following extract from a letter written to a friend more than a year after taking license :—

"With respect to preaching the Gospel, it is certainly, as you observe, an honourable, an important, and a pleasant employment. The difficulties in preparation, I find, are not likely to be so great as at first I imagined ; but with regard to the success little can be known by one in my situation, as we are commonly so short a time with the

* *Memoir of the Rev. John Richardson, Freuchie,* by the Rev. Dr Fraser of Kennoway, in *United Secession Magazine* for July, 1838.

people. If I am to judge of it from what is commonly called *popularity*, the result perhaps may not be very flattering. But this is certainly not the only criterion. It is my part to do what I am convinced is my duty, and leave the rest to God, who alone can affect the heart. But for one to do his duty in this office with a rightly ordered mind is no easy matter. Selfish or interested motives, vanity or pride, are extremely ready to mingle themselves with our most solemn services. This, perhaps, may be one reason why they are often less successful than they otherwise might be."

These sentences reveal the character of the man whom the Burghers of Freuchie chose to care for their souls. That they were written in all earnestness is proved by the faithfulness with which he performed the duties of a long and laborious ministry.

ORDINATION SERVICE.

After passing his "trials for ordination"—which, by the way, included an exegesis, a thesis, reading part of both Testaments in the originals, an account of a prescribed period in church history, and examination in doctrinal and practical theology—he was appointed to be ordained on 25th July, 1798; "said day to be observed in the congregation as a day of humiliation till the public worship of the day be concluded." The Presbytery was constituted in William Scott's house, the moderator for the day being Mr Richardson's fellow-student, the Rev. (afterwards Dr) Donald Fraser of Kennoway, a man of considerable scholarship. On adjourning to the church the Rev. David Telford, the first minister of Buckhaven, whose memory is still much revered in that place, preached from Heb. xii. 15, "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and

so many be defiled." The ordination sermon was preached by the Moderator, who took for his text Isa. xxi. 15-17, a strange passage to expound on such an occasion, but which he doubtless handled most profitably after the spiritualising method of the time. "After prayer," says the Presbytery record, "Mr Fraser called Mr Richardson, and, in presence of the congregation, read the preamble affixed to the formula by the appointment of Synod in 1797." This sentence recalls the fact that the "New Light" controversy was then at its height; a controversy which had been initiated some time before by Mr Fraser's father, the Rev. John Fraser of Auchtermuchty, and which issued the following year in the disruption of the Church.* Mr Richardson must have been among the first to accept, as a probationer, the famous *preamble*, in which the earliest statement is made of the important reservation, that "whereas some parts of the standard-books of this Synod have been interpreted as favouring compulsory measures in religion, the Synod hereby declare that they do not require an approbation of any such principle." Upon answering the questions of the formula, Mr Richardson was ordained to the office of the ministry, and "the members of the congregation then took their minister by the hand." Simple words, yet how solemnly suggestive! We almost feel the warm pressure of hands that have grown cold, and see the responsive smiles of the young minister, although his grey hairs have long since been laid in the grave, and his glorified spirit has received the greetings of the Church above!

MANSE BUILT.

As a suitable house could not be at once secured, Mr Richardson lodged for nearly a year with William Scott;

* The disruption in the *Antiburgher* Synod did not take place till 1806.

and on the house at Freuchie Mill—now Mr Cuthbert's—becoming vacant, he took up his quarters there. It was not till six years after that the erection of a manse, which had probably been long spoken of as a necessity, was at length begun. It was completed in the following year, and cost £165 3s 6d. This effort does not seem to have impoverished the people, or exhausted the springs of their liberality; for next year they were able to increase their minister's stipend to £90.

CALL TO CROSSGATES.

Perhaps these events ought not to be too closely connected in our minds with another which took place about the same time. Still we may be pardoned for the suspicion that it was a unanimous call from the newly-formed congregation of Crossgates in 1803, just five years after Mr Richardson's settlement among them, that served to stir up the people to a sense of their duty. Crossgates was in many respects a most inviting field. The call was signed by 160 members, besides adherents; and the prospect of rapid increase is shown by the fact that a church with 530 sittings had been built in the previous year. The stipend offered was £80, with the promise of a manse and garden, and an early increase to £100 per annum—a handsome income in those days. Both congregations belonged to the same Presbytery, and their commissioners appeared at Kirkcaldy on 27th December, 1803, to urge reasons for and against the translation. Mr Richardson did waver for a time, but at length elected to remain in Freuchie, believing that in doing so he was following the pointing of Providence. What success he might have had in Crossgates it is needless to conjecture; but the people of his charge had good cause, when his determination reached them, to "thank God and take courage." Their love had

been quickened by the fear of loss; while the expression of their pleasure at their minister's decision was most stimulating to him, and led him to apply himself with increased vigour to the work of his life.

CHAPTER IV.

OBSOLETE CUSTOMS.

RESERVING for a subsequent section the principal events in the first ministry which do not admit of classification, we pass from the course of the narrative to note some features of church life in our village which have now disappeared. We doubt not that the old who still remember them—and they are few—will enjoy a classification of them, as well as the young whose lot has fallen upon better times. And yet these days are not altogether better than the days of which we write, although in most respects there has been, in the things pertaining to the sanctuary, "the survival of the fittest."

CATECHISING.

Pastoral visitation long ago was a very different exercise from that which frequently goes by that name in our day. It was not a mere "look in" by the minister to enjoy a few minutes' talk with the members—a talk which too often comes dangerously near to gossip. Ministers had more time at their disposal, for it was an age when men could take a full hour to do an hour's work. Mr Richardson generally read and expounded a portion of Scripture, addressing his remarks, which were not usually brief, to the special circumstances of the family; and before leaving he always engaged in prayer. Besides his ordinary visita-

tion, he regularly conducted what were called "diets of catechising." There were certain houses in each district into which the families near were gathered, for the purpose of being orally examined by the minister in their knowledge of the Bible and Catechism. These examinations, be it noted, were not for children only, but for all; the elders alone being exempt. Age was not accepted as an evidence of knowledge. Young men and maidens, old men and children, all were required in turn to answer questions in sacred history, repeat the commandments, or give the Westminster definition of "effectual calling." Mr Richardson is said to have excelled in this work, and to have pursued it with great diligence; and the result is seen in the extensive and accurate Bible knowledge of the older members of the congregation. There is more need than ever for some such system; for family training in our own village and throughout the country is not what it once was, nor does the average Sabbath school teaching of to-day approach in thoroughness the old catechetical method.

ELECTION AND ORDINATION OF ELDERS.

The mode of procedure in the election and ordination of elders, which was adhered to within living memory, was somewhat different from that now in vogue, and a description of it will be interesting to our younger readers. The congregation, which appears at one time to have been pretty widely scattered, was divided into "quarters," and each quarter met, under the presidency of a member of Session, for the election of one or more elders, according to the number of families to be represented. A congregational meeting was then held, at which the elections made by the various districts were ratified; and thereafter the elders-elect were examined by the Session, their edict served, and the day of ordination appointed. On that day

the moderator, in presence of the congregation, called upon all of them by name to come forward, and those who had decided to accept office presented themselves for ordination. The office to which they were set apart was no sinecure. They regularly visited the families in their districts, paying special attention to the sick, and distributing among the poor the sums which the congregation from time to time committed to them for that purpose.

READING THE LINE.

In the olden time, when books were few, and many could not read, it was necessary that each line of the psalm should be read aloud by the leader before singing; but the practice had become superfluous, and had been discontinued in most, if not all, of the urban congregations. But many good people there were, as there are still, who failed to distinguish clearly between the essential and the expedient in Christian worship, and by such the "run-line" innovation was strenuously opposed. Indeed, it had been the cause of the formation of more than one congregation; and "reading the line" was for a time as prominent a distinction of the Secession as "preaching without the paper" was more recently. As early as 1799, the year following Mr Richardson's ordination, the precentor, William Law, was "requested to continue to give out the line as formerly;" but the practice of continuous singing gradually gained ground. In 1818, George Suttie, who had been added to the Session nine years before, threatened to resign office "because the praise of God had been sometimes conducted in the church without reading the line." He was pressed by the Session to suspend his determination; but the advice given to the precentor twenty years before was not repeated, and the question was never again formally raised.

SCRIPTURES NOT PUBLICLY READ.

It is a somewhat remarkable fact that, in the early years of the century, the reading of Scripture did not form a part of the ordinary Sabbath service. We are not aware whether this omission was universal throughout the Secession, but we have it on the best authority that in Freuchie the reading of a chapter of the Bible in church would have been as strongly resented as reading the line would now. Probably the people had the idea that it was a waste of the precious time spent in the sanctuary for the minister to do what they could do for themselves. And certainly the reading of Scripture in public was not so necessary then as now, for it was carefully taught in every home, besides being read morning and evening at family worship. There are many in our day who attend church more or less regularly who would never see or hear the words of Scripture did they not hear them read from the pulpit as part of the ordinary routine of public worship.

SNUFFING THE CANDLES.

An evening service in the "meeting-house" was a rare occurrence, for the lighting of the building meant more than the turning on of a meter, and carrying a taper from jet to jet. The church was lit by means of candles, and the coaxing of these into brilliance was a tedious operation. Moreover, our fathers had a horror of ventilation, and on a winter evening every window was carefully closed. The result was that the smoke of the numerous "dips" accumulated at the ceiling, and the dark cloud gradually became larger and *lower*, till it sometimes reached the people's heads, and minister and congregation became invisible to one another. Many a prolix preacher has been compelled to bring his discourse to an abrupt close—perhaps at

sixteenthly—to save himself and his audience from suffocation! In order to keep the atmosphere as pure as possible, the candles required to be frequently snuffed during the service, which was often a cause of great vexation to the preacher. We are reminded of a good story of a city divine, who had left his lamp-lit church to preach in a certain country meeting-house in Fife. In the evening the beadle sat with a pair of snuffers in his hand, and at regular, and perhaps too frequent intervals, went the round of the candles, always concluding with the pair which stood on either side of the pulpit. Even during the opening exercises the preacher felt the annoyance, but he was not prepared for its continuance after he had thrown himself into his discourse. No sooner was the text announced than the march again commenced, and the preacher was in the midst of his first flight of eloquence when the officious beadle walked deliberately up the pulpit stair, and raised his snuffers to remove the imaginary cinder. Demosthenes could stand it no longer, and so arranged his gesture that the cause of his annoyance received such a box on the ear as made him keep his seat during the remainder of the service, while few in the audience noticed that anything unusual had occurred.

"TABLES" AT COMMUNION.

The following entry appears in the minutes of Session, dated third Sabbath of December, 1837:—"The sacrament of the Lord's Supper was observed here, and the simultaneous mode was adopted, with approbation of all concerned." This shows that for more than half-a-century the old system of "tables" has been obsolete in the congregation. But as it is still in vogue in many parts of the country, and not far from our own doors, it is unnecessary to describe it. The system is surrounded with

disadvantages, not the least of which is the necessity for protracting the services of a Communion Sabbath far beyond the ordinary limit. The occasion is seldom looked forward to with pleasure by the younger portion of the congregation, and we cannot be astonished that they do not regard it as a feast of joy. We can well remember the weariness of the flesh which was induced by sitting and listening to a long series of solemn addresses, extending from eleven o'clock to five, and enlivened only by occasional snatches of "Coleshill" as the communicants entered and left the tables. But it has also its advantages. Where there is a young family it enables the parents to remain at home by turns, and yet both enjoy the Communion. Probably the change had been long spoken of before being introduced, otherwise it must have encountered serious opposition. No one in the congregation would ever dream of counselling a return to the old custom.

TENT-PREACHING.

A Communion at Freuchie was always a centre of attraction to the surrounding districts, and the number of ordinary hearers was largely augmented by the multitudes of people who crowded to hear the tent-preaching. The *tent* was a portable pulpit, covered by an awning for protection from sun and wind. The tent from which the minister of Freuchie and his Communion assistants were wont to preach was generally placed on the moor to the north of the village, opposite the blacksmith's shop, while the audience filled the space in front. On such occasions Mr Richardson was generally at his best. "His voice," says an intimate friend, "though somewhat rough, being uncommonly powerful, and generally kept under command, was capable of reaching a vast auditory. We have seen him appear to great advantage, both as to the

weight of his sentiments and the energy of his manner, in preaching from a text immediately before the celebration of the Lord's Supper at Freuchie to possibly near

TWO THOUSAND HEARERS

assembled under the canopy of heaven." His sermon in the open-air was generally what would now be termed an evangelistic address, in which the gospel was presented with arousing and quickening force, yet withal so simply that the weakest could receive it. Many were able to look back on these occasions as times of refreshing, when the Spirit took of the things of Jesus and showed them to their souls.

OLD COMMUNION TOKEN.

(The initials I. R. stand for John Richardson).

CHAPTER V.

FASTS AND THANKSGIVINGS.

THE venerable Session minute book contains a complete record of the days of fasting and thanksgiving observed by the congregation. Besides the ordinary sacramental fasts, it appears that in the first half of Mr Richardson's ministry an average of nearly one day in the year was set apart for special fasting or thanksgiving. After 1820 we find only four such appointments. During the forty years of Mr Richardson's ministry there were ten fasts, ten thanksgivings, and four days for fasting and thanksgiving combined. Eight of the ten thanksgivings were also by Royal appointment or Synodical recommendation, while only three of the ten fasts were similarly appointed. Only one fast was appointed by the Presbytery. Two fasts and two thanksgivings are connected with the harvest, and it is impossible to classify the others.

CHURCH AND NATION.

It is a pleasing circumstance that the first act of the Session after Mr Richardson's ordination was the appointment of a day of thanksgiving. The Synod had, at its meeting in September, 1798, recommended the observance of "a day of fasting or thanksgiving, as Providence might call." We can easily understand the feeling of uncertainty as to which was more appropriate, for both in the outer

world and in the Synod itself there was the sound of war. But perhaps the Session regarded the lull in the New Light controversy on the one hand, and Nelson's victory at Aboukir on the other, as sufficient reason for appointing "a day of thanksgiving for the kindness of Providence to the church and nation."

CONTINUED WAR AND SCARCITY.

On 4th January, 1801, a fast was appointed "on account of the present alarming aspect of Providence in the continuance of war and scarcity." Napoleon had crossed the Alps six months before, and the battle of Marengo had turned the current of the world's history. The peace which followed was short-lived, and multitudes of the starving poor at home, as well as the soldiers at the seat of war, had reason to tremble at the renewal of hostilities. It was not till 8th June, 1802, that a day of thanksgiving could be appointed "for the return of peace."

SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL FAST.

Under date 10th February, 1805, the following entry occurs :—"Resolved that Thursday, the 21st curt., be observed as a day of fasting and humiliation in this congregation, and that reasons of fasting be drawn up by the Moderator." These reasons are not engrossed; but most probably they referred to three cases of discipline which had been sources of much annoyance to the Session, besides causing "great searchings of heart" to many. One of these cases had been repeatedly before the Presbytery; while another entailed an irritating correspondence with a neighbouring Session. This case had also to be referred to the Presbytery, and its decision had not been considered satisfactory. The matter was not finally settled till six months after.

THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO.

"The threatening aspect of Providence," on account of which the Session called upon the congregation to fast and pray on 18th February, 1808, evidently means the imminence of war in the Peninsula, which actually commenced in May. But the next two entries which we select for notice are even more interesting. On 3rd February, 1814, a thanksgiving was appointed "for remarkable dispensations of Providence in favour of this country and Europe." The reference is evidently to the Treaty of Paris, which put an end to Napoleon's dictatorship. But in less than a year "the little Caporal" effected his escape from Elba, and set France and Europe again in a blaze. The battle of Waterloo was fought and won on 18th June, 1815; and nowhere would the enthusiasm which followed be more hearty than in our own village. When the news arrived it doubtless sent the aproned weavers, with their spectacles high on their brows, into the street, eager to hear the fullest particulars of the glorious victory which saved Britain from becoming a French province. There were several in the village who had friends serving under Wellington. Perhaps some hearts were heavy by reason of bereavement; yet even they could not fail to join in the national thanksgiving "for the termination of the war." The congregation was at the same time called upon to thank God "for the late abundant harvest."

THE DROUGHT: PRAYER ANSWERED.

The year 1826 was rendered memorable by a long-continued drought, which brought the country to the verge of famine. In our own district the grain was so short of straw that most of it had to be pulled up by the root, as it was impossible to use the sickle. The pasture was

literally burned up. At that time there were no wells in the village or neighbourhood, and when the West Burn failed, the people were compelled to dig drains on the hill-side, which must have reminded the laird of Drums of the old proverb about "an ill wind." The Session appointed part of a day in July for fasting and prayer; and the minute has the following remarkable note appended in the handwriting of Mr Richardson:—"*N.B.*—It may not be altogether unworthy of record how that, as the congregation were dismissing on the above evening, some drops of rain began to fall, and soon afterwards there fell a copious rain, which was a great blessing to the country." It was indeed "a copious rain;" for the newly-cut drains were immediately flooded, and the people who were about them were drenched before they could reach places of shelter. There soon appeared such an aftergrowth as provided abundant pasture. Was this nothing more than a striking coincidence? Does it not rather lead to the reflection that if God's goodness were more fully acknowledged our prayers would be more frequently answered?

THE CHOLERA.

Old people speak with bated breath of "the cholera of '32." It was its first visit to this country; and the mortality in some parts of Fife, especially along the south coast, was without precedent, the mystery which surrounded the foreign pestilence adding greatly to the terror which it inspired. In obedience to a recommendation of Presbytery, the Session appointed the 22nd of March as "a day of fasting and humiliation on account of the present aspect of providence, particularly the prevalence of a pestilential disease in different parts of the country." Although the water in the village was none of the best—the West Burn, as before mentioned, affording the only supply—Freuchie

escaped most marvellously both in this and subsequent visitations. There was only one death, which took place in the month of October. As the body was carried through the village to the old churchyard of Falkland, the street was almost deserted. A man walked some distance in front, warning the few pedestrians to keep to windward; and many of the people were seen flying over the fields to escape the infection. Shortly afterwards the mortality declined; but a deep impression had been made upon the community, which the Session wisely took advantage of by recommending that prayer meetings for the revival of religion should be held in the various districts of the congregation. On 24th February, 1833, it was "agreed that on an early Sabbath thanks should be given to God for His goodness in delivering the nation from pestilence."

A MISSIONARY MEETING.

At the meeting of Synod in 1833 an interesting letter was received from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. As early as 1742 an appeal for preachers had been addressed to the Associate Presbytery by the settlers in Pennsylvania; but the need of men at home was too clamant for the request to be acceded to, and nothing was done till after the Breach. Both branches of the Secession, however, had given early and energetic attention to the claims of America, and the United Secession had now the joy of beholding the fair proportions of that goodly tree, in the planting of which it had taken such an important part. The Synod could not but listen, with the profoundest gratitude, to the communication which was presented from the Assembly of the American Church, containing as it did a history of marvellous progress in the face of stupendous obstacles. Many who heard it must have been convinced that foreign mission enterprise was no

losing game, as they saw the bread which had been cast upon the waters—the first crumbs a hundred and thirty years before*—returning thus "after many days." A cordial response was given to the Assembly's request "that the Synod would co-operate with the Assembly, and with other religious communities, in setting apart the first Monday in January in the ensuing year as a season of special prayer and fasting for the conversion of the world to Christ." In accordance with the Synod's recommendation, the Session appointed the second part of the 6th of January for "prayer and fasting, along with the General Assembly of America, for the spread of the gospel over the world." The first part of the day was devoted to "thanksgiving for the goodness of God to the Secession Church during the course of a hundred years;" although the actual centenary of the first meeting of the Associate Presbytery at Gairney Bridge did not occur till the following December. Such a day of thanksgiving and prayer, accompanied as it doubtless was by earnest and appropriate preaching, could not fail to bring much blessing to the congregation.

These were the most notable of the fasts and thanksgivings observed by the congregation during Mr Richardson's ministry; but there were several others, besides the ordinary sacramental fasts, which do not call for special mention. That these occasions were valued by the people is beyond question, as is proved by the fact that they were kept with great strictness. The knowledge that they were of human appointment had an opposite tendency from what might have been expected; for the people felt that while the Sabbath was secure, the fast required most jealous guard-

* Six ministers, five of whom were emigrants from Scotland and Ireland, formed a Presbytery in 1704, and held their first meeting for business in Philadelphia.

ing. Not only were the services generally better attended than those on Sabbath, but the whole life of the people was thrown more completely out of its ordinary groove. To observe such days of fasting and thanksgiving would not now be practicable, even if it were desirable; but there is perhaps a greater need than ever for cherishing the spirit which animated our pious forefathers, when they "afflicted their souls" on account of the judgments of the Lord, or sought to stir themselves up to praise Him for His abundant goodness.

CHAPTER VI.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

AS to whether, so far as the moral tone of the congregation is concerned, the former days were better than these, we shall not enquire. But certainly if strictness of discipline, both in matter and mode, could have kept a church free from scandal, then surely the Burghers of Freuchie would have realised the separatists' dream of a "clean table!"

MATTER OF DISCIPLINE.

The attention of the Session was not confined to such offences as are now alone counted worthy of church censure, but was occasionally directed to others which were as justly considered inconsistent with the Christian profession. One man, for example, was for a time refused baptism for his child because in his dealings "there were some things which had rather a suspicious appearance in point of honesty;" another, whose transactions were reported to be somewhat shady, saved himself from excommunication by appearing before the Session and giving a full account of himself; while a third was dealt with because he did not appear to be on the best of terms with some of his neighbours. When a case of scandal was brought forward, the Session spared no trouble in sifting the matter; and the decision had such a powerful influence on public opinion,

that more than once the court was requested by members suffering under the evil tongues of their neighbours to examine evidence for their defence. The hearing of witnesses in the Session is by no means an obsolete custom; but it is doubtful whether now any cases are tried with the same business-like precision which characterised the procedure of those early days. The congregation also took a lively interest in what concerned the purity of the church, and petitioned the Session anent cases which came before them, as well as gave evidence for or against when required. But while the members took advantage of the free access to the Session which the law of the church secured for them, the scandal-monger was an abomination, and we find even the gossiper smartly dealt with.

PUBLIC REBUKE.

During the first twenty-five years of Mr Richardson's ministry the censure of "flagrant and scandalous sins" was always administered in the presence of the whole congregation, during one of the ordinary Sabbath services. The ancient "stool of repentance" had not, so far as we are aware, one surviving representative in Scotland at that time; but there was an appointed place in front of the pulpit where delinquents stood to be rebuked. Besides submitting to much private dealing, penitents were required to appear three times; once before the Session to make acknowledgment, again before the congregation to be "rebookit," and a third time to be publicly received back into the fellowship of the church. It was severe treatment, from which many a nervous system never fully recovered. Experience has proved that it was not, on the whole, a wise arrangement. It made it essential to treat all cases exactly alike, irrespective of natural temperament, and even of the comparative heinousness of the offences. It

was thus out of harmony with the plain teaching of Scripture, which provides for "making a difference;"* and even the command most frequently quoted must be torn from its context to lend a seeming support to the custom: "Against *an elder* receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others may fear."†

AN UNHAPPY INCIDENT.

Mr Richardson was, in the estimation of all, "perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil." Perhaps the righteous soul of the worthy minister did not so fully sympathise with the unfortunate subjects of discipline as some who were themselves less righteous. But the heart of the good man was more deeply touched when one of his own household—his domestic servant—was involved. Although he had doubtless often grieved over the shame as well as the sin of those whom he was called upon to rebuke, never before had he witnessed the terrors with which a sensitive girl anticipated the fearful ordeal. So keenly did he sympathise with her, that he endeavoured to shield her by inducing the Session to abolish the practice of public censure, especially "in certain cases" in which there was much extenuation of guilt, as well as clear evidence of true penitence. While acceding to his proposal, however, the Session wisely insisted "that those who at present were known to be guilty should be treated in the ordinary way, to avoid the charge of partiality." Next week the person afore-mentioned was brought before the Session, and the court "agreed that she should appear before the congregation next Lord's-day, at the entry of public worship in the afternoon, and be rebuked." On the

* Jude 22.

† 1 Tim. v. 20. "Before *all*" refers to the meeting of presbyters, according to most expositors.

following Sabbath, when the first-comers entered the church in the afternoon, they were astonished to find the minister already in the pulpit, standing and speaking. When the true state of matters appeared, it caused great dissatisfaction in the congregation; and there were not awanting those who sought to magnify the offence, and even to add falsehood to truth. Indeed, it would seem that the whole truth was never told, or that it was soon forgotten that the Session shared the responsibility of the action, in ignoring their former decision, and permitting the censure to be administered "*at the entry* of public worship," instead of after the service had commenced. But while we gladly seize this opportunity of clearing a good man's memory of a fault with which he has been generally charged, we are compelled to admit that he showed a respect of persons which was exceptionally strange in him. At the same time, the incident reveals the more beautiful side of his nature, and that most in harmony with the character of Him who "brake not the bruised reed nor quenched the smoking flax."

PUBLIC CENSURE ABOLISHED.

About a year later, on 31st October, 1824, the Session appointed one who came before them to be publicly rebuked on the following Sabbath, "but not till after the blessing is pronounced;" and the custom was adhered to till a comparatively recent date. This simply means that the rebuke was public in name only, for on such occasions "the kirk skailed" with unusual rapidity. It was not to be expected that such an innovation could be suffered to enter the church without protest. Within two months after the final decision, John Henderson, a worthy member of the congregation, presented a petition to the Session, praying them to "review and revise" said decision; but it

was "allowed to lie on the table." Mr Henderson was ordained to the eldership in 1830; and three years later he and a fellow-elder "begged leave to dissent from the present mode of exercising discipline, and requested that their reasons of dissent should be marked in the minutes of Session." The reasons which they tabled are interesting, not only as an evidence of the piety and superior intelligence of the men, but as showing that much can be said in support of the practice for which they contended.

REASONS OF DISSENT.

1. We disapprove of such a practice, and deplore its continuance in this congregation, because it is anti-Scriptural; the express language of Scripture being—"Them that sin rebuke before all, that others may fear."

2. Because it is directly opposed to the spirit and principles of the Secession Church to which we belong.

3. Because it has a tendency to destroy vital religion, and to extinguish the love of everything sacred and divine. When once the office-bearers of the church become negligent in the performance of their duties, the people consider that they have the liberty to scoff at religion, and neglect ordinances both public and private. And woe be to the people who are enticed to go astray by the example of persons holding influential situations in the church; for then "the leaders of this people cause them to err, and they that are led of them are destroyed!"

4. Because we consider it as a breaking down of the walls of Zion to admit notorious offenders into her bosom in a private and concealed manner. Office-bearers in the church ought not to lower the standards of religion to suit the tastes of the men of this world; but, on the contrary, ought to "mark well her bulwarks, and consider her palaces, that they may tell it to the generation following:"

for the more that indulgence is given to sin of every description, the deeper will it strike its roots, and the wider will it spread its branches.

5. Because the administration of private censure to the fallen members of the church is injurious to the people of the congregation in general, inasmuch as they are deprived of the warning that is given against the commission of similar offences; and they have no satisfaction given them as to the submission and penitence of fallen members. In short, they are left almost entirely ignorant of their restoration, and are deprived of a public opportunity of receiving them again with cordial love and affection into the bosom of the church.

7. Because we lose an opportunity of exhibiting to the world how pure our religion is, and how it discountenances all vice and immorality, and how God is highly displeased with the offences of His people.

8. Because it is an offence to the brethren; and we ought not to give offence to them by a practice which has no warrant in the Word of God. We ought to walk as God has commanded us, and to do nothing contrary to the plain precepts contained in His holy Word.

IRREGULAR MARRIAGES.

Before dismissing the subject of church discipline, we ought to mention a misdemeanour which was never publicly censured, but which the Session dealt with as an offence against the church, whose purity must be above suspicion. Yet there were many honest reasons which might induce persons to enter into what was termed an irregular marriage, in which the "proclamation of banns" was dispensed with. Even the law made provision for exceptional cases. But as a rule these marriages could not be registered; and although the marriage itself was quite regular, the parties

had no means of proving it. We have been assured that in many cases the parties were required to "stand the Session" more for protection than for discipline, an extract from the Session records being accepted by the civil court as a valid certificate of marriage. In 1855 the law was so modified that "irregular" marriages could be no longer solemnized; but long before that date they had fallen so into disrepute, that the old Scotch expedient ceased to be taken advantage of by respectable people.

CHAPTER VII.

FINANCE.

NOT the least interesting of the sources of our information is the old "day-book" of the congregation, although its record is not always intelligible, nor so full as its name would lead us to expect. Yet the old-fashioned figures in faded ink speak eloquently of heroic attachment to "distinctive principles," and we find written between the lines many a noteworthy lesson for to-day.

But in order to read these lessons well we must

MAKE ALLOWANCES

for men whose lot was cast in other times. We require to keep carefully in mind the relative value of money then and now. The large majority of the men of the congregation were handloom weavers, whose average weekly wage did not much exceed six shillings. There were other tradesmen; but it is doubtful if the average of their earnings was larger—possibly it was smaller. The number of the poor in the parish seems to have been much larger than it is now, and a fair proportion of these belonged to the congregation, as is shown by the sums contributed for their relief. Moreover, the country was wholly dependent upon its own resources, so that bad harvests—and these were frequent—brought great privation upon the poor, and

even upon the respectable working population. These troubles were greatly increased in the earlier part of the century by the prolonged war and revolutionary panic which paralysed the commerce of Europe, and the effects of which continued long after. Besides all these allowances, there is another which we must not forget to make. What is called the "voluntary principle" had not been so clearly enunciated as it has been since. Our Secession congregations were composed of men who had left a State-endowed church, in which it was not considered necessary to preach the doctrine of Christian liberality. The shackles had been struck from their limbs ; but the marks remained, and the long bondage had stiffened their joints. Indeed, it may be said that the same allowance must be made even in this day, when we see with sorrow how far our own church is in this respect from the full enjoyment of that liberty wherewith Christ hath made her free.

CONGREGATIONAL DEBT.

Very little of the expense of building the church and manse appears to have been immediately cleared by the congregation, who preferred to leave some of the burden upon the shoulders of their descendants. Besides, it was considered positively advantageous to a congregation to be in debt. It may be granted that a long struggle for deliverance has in some cases done good to a congregation ; but what benefit could be expected to flow from tame submission to what was for long an unnecessary burden ? Perhaps the members had less difficulty in persuading themselves of the high expediency of being in debt, as many of them were their own creditors—at a tidy interest ! Little effort was made during Mr Richardson's ministry to liquidate the debt, and it was not till many years after his death that it was wholly removed.

THE COLLECTION.

Besides the ordinary church-door collections, many members subscribed annually to the congregational fund, in fulfilment of a promise made to the Presbytery when moderation was granted. But this expedient seems to have been soon abandoned as unnecessary, as the balance in the treasurer's hands grew from year to year. Over five of the earlier years the collections averaged £47 3s annually, or a little over eighteen shillings per Sabbath; and this average was fully maintained, but never greatly exceeded, during the first ministry.

"OLD HALFPENNIES."

In speaking of the collection, we are reminded of the following entries in the day-book in the first year of the century:—"Cash in old halfpence, £1 17s 11½d." and on the other side, "By loss of old halfpence, £1 6s 3½d." The most probable explanation is that the accumulated stock of worn coins reckoned as good amounted to the former sum, but that the lot had to be sold as old copper for 11s 8d.*

SEAT RENTS.

What congregation with a lengthened history has not, at some period, been troubled about seat rents? The system is really as difficult to defend as it is to destroy. It is opposed to that voluntary principle which we as a church profess to admire, believing as we do that it is in harmony

* "In 1775 the treasurer of the congregation had no less than forty-three and a half pounds weight in bad halfpennies, which was sold as old copper for fourteen shillings and three halfpence. It is very strange that Christian people should think the church plate a fit receptacle for bad coins—as if the Lord would take from them what their baker or their grocer would refuse. *Doubtless other congregations have had the same story to tell."—History of Colinsburgh U.P. Church,* by Rev. R. Dick.

with the Word of God. The attention of the Session was again and again directed to the subject during the first ministry, and defaulting members dealt with in ways which would not now be tolerated. In June, 1804, intimation was made from the desk, "that members of the congregation being able, but not taking seats in the church, shall not be admitted to sealing ordinances;" and in November of the same year "a more particular intimation" was read from the *pulpit*, to the effect that defaulters should, after the first term of seat-letting, be excluded from communion with the church! In May, 1805, the congregational clerk was required to make out a list of those to be dealt with; and next month the elders were instructed to intimate to the members in their districts "that, unless such of them as were able should promise to take seats at the ensuing term, they should not be served with tokens when the Lord's Supper was dispensed." The duty which the elders thus laid upon themselves must have been an exceedingly unpleasant one, but the action of the Session seems to have had the desired effect. In 1816, however, the difficulty had again to be faced, and the former deeds of Session enforced by a joint-meeting of elders and managers. At a similar meeting in 1829, when the congregational fund seems to have been in a backward state, and the minister had to be content to receive his stipend in miserable driblets, it was "found that, in consequence of a great number of the members not taking seats, it was indispensably necessary to do something for the improvement of their own funds, and agreed that in future the seat rents shall be received by district collectors at the houses of the members." This is the last mention of seat rents in Mr Richardson's minutes, but they never ceased to be a source of trouble; nor will they till the system be abolished. The honour of initiating this reform in church finance cannot

be ours, for many congregations are now *purely* voluntary. We can only express the earnest hope that we shall not long hesitate to follow their worthy example.

MISSIONARY AND BENEVOLENT.

The appointment in 1833 of a day of "prayer and fasting for the spread of the gospel over the world," leads us naturally to enquire whether the congregation had before that time taken any active interest in missions at home or abroad. All special collections were made by appointment of Session, and there is no reason to believe that the record preserved in the carefully kept minute book is not complete. Yet a collection for the Scottish Missionary Society in the year 1822 is the only collection of the kind which appears. We are assured by the writer of the *Memoir* already quoted that Mr Richardson not only became a member of a society of ministers formed for the purpose of occasionally preaching missionary sermons on week-days to their congregations, but that "during the whole period of his ministry he approved himself a warm and steady friend of Bible and Missionary Societies, by the active exertions he was ever disposed to make on their behalf." But his efforts to kindle the flame of missionary zeal in the congregation seem to have been abortive. At a joint-meeting of elders and managers in 1829, he "presented the claims of several pious and charitable institutions on the liberality of the congregation, one at least of which was strongly recommended by the Synod." What institutions these were we are not informed; and it little matters, for it was at this meeting that the assembled office-bearers, while "cordially willing to do all in their power for these laudable institutions, found it indispensably necessary" to send seat rent collectors from door to door. On 18th July, 1836—exactly six months before Mr Richardson's death—

the Session "agreed to make an attempt to form a Missionary Society in the congregation;" but either the attempt was not made or it failed, for the Society was not formed till two years afterwards.

Nor can the collection appointed in August "for the

CONGREGATION IN PERTH"

(now Wilson Church), be regarded as a home mission effort. The circumstances which led the Session to make the appointment are interesting, however, as the record of them forms an important chapter in the history of the denomination. In the year 1799 the Perth congregation, like many others, was divided by the controversy which arose on the alteration of the formula, the Old Light party holding by Mr Jervie, and the New Light party following Mr Aikman, his colleague. In 1800 Mr Jervie declined the authority of the Synod, and, with other ministers, formed the Original Burgher Synod.* A long course of litigation ensued, and it was not till 1815 that the Court of Session finally decided in favour of the party adhering to the United Secession, the House of Lords confirming the judgment in 1819, twenty years after the commencement of the controversy. The Synod of 1814, recognising the vital importance of the case, as involving the interests of many congregations, engaged to defray all expenses; and it was in obedience to Synodical injunction that the Session appointed the collection.

The help rendered three years later to the congregation of Arbroath (now Erskine Church), was more purely benevolent. The congregation was formed in 1814, but

*The Original Burghers joined the Establishment in 1839, thereby swelling the evangelical majority in the General Assembly. Had they not done so it is doubtful if the Disruption would ever have taken place. They "came out" with the Free Church in 1843.

their church, commenced soon after, was not finished till 1821. In 1817 the congregation appealed to Freuchie Session by deputation, and the appeal was not made in vain.

THE POOR.

With the exception of two collections for Edinburgh Royal Infirmary, and another for the relief of distress in Ireland in 1822, the above are the only collections for outside missionary and benevolent purposes which the congregation made during the first ministry, unless we include occasional collections for the Synod Fund, and one (1806) for the building of the "Synod-house." But the poor of the congregation were not neglected, the funds contributed by the congregation for their behoof being distributed by the elders in their districts. In 1831 a petition from William Halkerston was received and read, "requesting the Session to appoint a monthly collection for the benefit of the poor," and the Session at once acceded to his request. The first collection amounted to £1; and although we cannot infer that this rate was maintained, yet the collection is a pleasing evidence that many shared Mr Halkerston's faith in the divine assurance that "he that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord."

CHAPTER VIII.

IN MEMORIAM.

IN the preceding chapters we have found a place for almost every incident of importance in Mr Richardson's ministry, and little more remains to be done than to sketch his character and record his sudden death.

HIS PERSONAL APPEARANCE.

We think of Mr Richardson as a man of rather short stature, dressed in homespun gray, with his hair combed straight back from a lofty forehead, and carefully powdered. In the earlier years of his ministry he wore knee-breeches, and he always carried a substantial walking-stick. His appearance in the pulpit was commanding, and his action vigorous—perhaps to a fault. His voice would have filled a building ten times the size of the old meeting-house; and in his energy he resembled John Knox, of whom it was said that when he preached in St Andrews he was "like to ding the pulpit into blads."

HIS CHARACTER.

He does not seem to have inspired "love at first sight." There was a certain austerity in his manner which repelled a stranger, and caused him to form a false impression of the man. The recollection of aged members, who still speak of him with profound respect, fully supports the testimony of his biographer, that "he possessed that

sterling worth which makes a person valued in proportion as he is known; for, whatever might be the impressions produced by a first interview, he never failed to secure the cordial esteem and affection of those who thoroughly knew him." He is spoken of as a man of strong will; but he is remembered also as an energetic and painstaking pastor, as well as an example to the flock of high-toned Christian morality. He was by no means narrowly conservative, as his writings abundantly show; while his opposition to voluntaryism showed also that he could refuse, under a sense of duty, to go forward even with a majority of his brethren. By his family he was much beloved. "He combined firmness with great kindness," says his daughter, "enjoining from the very youngest the strictest truthfulness and honesty, the love of which I am inclined to regard as the most prominent feature of his character."

HIS PREACHING.

Mr Richardson was reckoned "a good preacher," albeit there were defects in his style which somewhat marred his popularity. His sermons generally exceeded in length even the average of his day; and he was in the habit of introducing praise and prayer near the middle of his discourse —an interruption which not only refreshed his hearers, but enabled him to enter with renewed vigour into the second part, which was usually superior to the first. The matter of his preaching was excellent, and gave evidence of careful preparation. Sometimes it was highly imaginative, sometimes too deeply speculative; but he never lost sight of the central truths of the gospel, nor failed to apply them with telling force. His texts frequently bore upon experimental religion or Christian morality, and in handling them he often rose to a degree of pathos and energy highly impressive.

POWER IN PRAYER.

The few survivors of those who enjoyed his ministrations speak much of the spirit of genuine devotion which he breathed. His public prayers gave evidence of frequent communion with God in the privacy of his own chamber, and were by many more valued than his sermons. One of the prayers in each service exceeded half-an-hour in length, yet such was the variety of expression which he was able to maintain, that the pious ones of the congregation never wearied. His knowledge of Scripture, the aptness of his quotations, and the ingenuity with which these were dovetailed into each other, were astonishing. We have been assured that there was scarcely an appropriate Bible phrase which he had not at some time or another made use of in prayer. Abundant use of Scriptural expressions was common in his day, but he excelled all his neighbours in the facility with which he introduced them, as well as the unction with which they were uttered.

INFLUENCE IN THE CHURCH.

"He felt the importance of the duty which devolved upon him as a member of church courts. During his whole career he was seldom absent from the meetings of Presbytery or Synod without a sufficient apology. His co-presbyters reposed full confidence in the candour and sincerity with which he bore his part in the causes that came under consideration. At a meeting of the Presbytery of Cupar,* a few months before his lamented departure—the last meeting, we believe, he found it convenient to attend—he conducted an examination of several students

* When the Burghers and Antiburghers united in 1820, a re-arrangement of Presbyteries became necessary, and the congregation was transferred from Dunfermline to Cupar.

on some points of the Arminian controversy in a manner that met the marked approbation of his brethren. At the meetings of Synod he not unfrequently took part in the deliberations. Although he did not always succeed in commanding the attention of the court, his straightforward honesty was never questioned, and many of his speeches were appropriate and useful. . . . . He had the honour to be chosen

MODERATOR OF SYNOD

in September, 1810; and in consequence, at the opening of the Synod in the month of April following, he delivered an impressive sermon from 2 Cor. v. 18—'All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given unto us the ministry of reconciliation.'"†

We have already (p. 13) spoken of the good service he rendered to the church in moving for the abolition of Synodical interference in competing calls. We find an entry in the Session records, dated 4th March, 1832, to the effect that a petition from the congregation was transmitted to the Synod "craving that, when a congregation is deprived of their minister by transportation [acceptance of a call], they shall be indemnified for the expense" by the congregation benefited. The supposed grievance was removed, but we are not aware how much its removal was owing to the exertions of the minister of Freuchie; and the new law, after remaining a dead letter for many years, was ultimately removed from the statute-book of the church.

PRESENTIMENTS.

Mr Richardson generally enjoyed good health, but the ailment from which he suffered so severely in his student days returned more than once during his ministry. In the

† *Memoir.*

winter of 1827 he had an attack of rheumatic fever which laid him aside for several months, and it is doubtful if he ever regained his former vigour. For some time before his death he felt the weight of years pressing heavily upon him; and the following extract from a letter to a friend, written about six months before his death, shows that he was not without presentiment of his approaching end:—

"I would have been to see you when you were complaining, but, owing to an asthmatic complaint with which I have been troubled for some time, I find walking to any great distance inconvenient for me. My dear friend, I find that my life and labours must, by-and-bye, draw to a conclusion. I do not know how I may feel when that time comes, but I hope that, in the strength of divine grace, I may meet it, if not in triumph, at least with some degree of calmness and composure. I hope, as life advances near its termination, we shall be enabled to cleave closer to our Redeemer; and, under the protection of redeeming love, what have we to fear? I need not ask the aid of your prayers; that I know I have."

HIS FIRST AND LAST SOIREE.

About this time an effort was made to erect a day-school in Freuchie, the parish school being at Falkland. In order to raise part of the necessary funds, it was proposed to have a *soiree*, such a meeting being quite a novelty in the district. The proposal was cordially responded to by all but Mr Richardson, who objected to the church—the only public building in the village—being used for such a purpose. He was never afraid to speak his mind on any subject, and his honesty—to which, it must be confessed, he sometimes added a little asperity—had alienated some of his people. The date of the soiree was fixed—Wednesday, 17th January, 1837—although he persistently refused to preside, or even to be present. So strong was his aversion to what he regarded as a secularizing of a sacred building, that on the Sabbath preceding the meeting he

chose for his text 1 Cor. iii. 17—"If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy." The sermon was the last he ever preached. Whether his objections were afterwards removed, or he felt sufficiently satisfied with having given them public expression, we cannot say, but he yielded at last to the earnest entreaties of his friends, and consented to preside. His decision gave unbounded satisfaction, and many whose hearts had grown somewhat cold towards their old minister forgot their grudges, and took pains to show their change of feeling. Never did he preside so happily. The subject of his opening address was the excellence and beauty of Christian love; and a tear sparkled in his eye as he remarked that "where love dwelt God would dwell, evil spirits would grieve, and holy angels rejoice." Not only was he frequently applauded during the course of his address, but whenever he opened his lips the people hastened to show their approbation. He was cheered to the echo when he declared, at the close of the meeting, that he was delighted when he entered, but much more delighted now. The vote of thanks to the chairman was most cordial, the cheering being again and again renewed. In his reply he bade the audience good-night, and added emphatically, but with a quivering voice, "*Farewell!*"

THE END.

"On his way home to the manse, in company with a brother minister, and followed at the distance of a few paces by his eldest daughter, with some more friends and neighbours, among whom was a medical gentleman, he was suddenly seized with what proved to be the grasp of death, by which he was deprived of all power of motion, and almost of speech. He was quickly placed in an arm-chair, and carried home. Everything that kind and anxious

friends and surgical skill could do to afford relief was promptly done; but, alas! in vain. Within a quarter of an hour after he was lain on his bed, and scarcely half-an-hour after he had bidden farewell to the happy company with whom he had spent the evening, his tabernacle was dissolved, and his disembodied spirit had departed to join the happier company of the spirits of just men made perfect."*

Doctors said that he died of ossification of the heart, and probably the medical opinion was correct. But the general impression was that he died of *joy*. Although, as a faithful minister, he thought not of men's opinions while he delivered his message, he valued the affection of his people, as every faithful minister does, above all earthly treasure. The sudden outburst of that affection, which had languished for a time, was too much for him, for beneath a stern exterior he had a most tender heart. His loss was all the more deeply felt that it came so suddenly; and the universal grief was rendered more poignant by the thought that his high worth had never been fully appreciated. The excitement in the village was intense. Many never retired to rest that night, but wandered from house to house discussing the sad catastrophe. His death was more eloquent and impressive than any sermon he had ever preached during his life; and many a thoughtless one was led to ponder the solemn warning—"Be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh!"

HIS DESCENDANTS.

Mr Richardson was twice married: first to Grace, daughter of Mr Pratt, farmer, of Bunzion, near Pitlessie, by whom he had ten children; and, six years before his death, to Margaret, daughter of Mr Ballingall, Burnmill,

* *United Secession Magazine.*

near Leven. The first Mrs Richardson is still spoken of as a woman of exemplary industry and thrift, who also took a deep interest in her husband's work and in all that concerned the welfare of his people. Of her it was literally true that "she sought wool and flax, and wrought willingly with her hands: she laid her hands to the spindle, and her hands held the distaff." "My mother was a model minister's wife," writes one of her daughters; and the testimony of those who remember her leads to the impression that her husband might have placed over her tomb the quaint epitaph,

> "She was—but words are wanting to say what:
> Think what a wife should be, and she was that!"

The following particulars of the family have been kindly furnished by Mr William Richardson (second son), who still survives at the "green old age" of 81 years:—

"John, eldest son, was trained to mercantile pursuits: emigrated to Sydney in 1837, and in 1841 established the firm of John Richardson & Co. of Brisbane, which did a large and successful business. After some years of arduous work, he retired about 1856; but in 1872 he re-commenced business in Armidale, N. S. Wales, and established the firm of J. Richardson & Co., which is still carried on by his sons. He died at Armidale in 1888, aged 77 years. For a long time he was a member of the Legislative Assembly of N. S. Wales, first as member for the county of Stanley, and afterwards as member for Brisbane, capital of Queensland. When a re-arrangement of boundaries took place he was called to the Legislative Council, or Upper House, of which he continued a member till the time of his death. His eldest son, Robert Richardson, B.A., came to Edinburgh in 1872, and resided there for a period of twenty-two years, being well-known as the popular author of 'Almost a Hero,' 'Beneath the Southern Cross,' and other books for boys. He still follows literary pursuits in the land of his birth.

"William, second son, went to business, by his own wish, when thirteen years of age. Early in 1840 he emigrated to Sydney, where he pursued a mercantile life until 1850. In that year he inaugurated the Bank of New South Wales in Queensland (the first banking establishment in that colony), and continued there till 1853. In 1854 he returned to Britain, and has ever since resided in London, engaged in mercantile and financial business. He is thankful to the Giver of all good that his labours and energies have been attended with a fair amount of success, to an extent which, at an early period of his life, he never anticipated.

"Alexander, third son, graduated at Edinburgh University with a view to becoming a minister of the U.P. Church, but eventually devoted himself to teaching, of which he was passionately fond. For several years he taught at Brechin, afterwards removing to Glasgow, where he conducted a high-class West End school. On leaving Glasgow he returned to Edinburgh, where he became a frequent contributor to the press, and created a good deal of stir by publishing a volume, entitled 'The Future Church of Scotland,' by 'Free-Lance.' When on a visit to his brother William in London in 1878, he took a sudden illness, and in a few days died at the age of fifty-seven years.

"Of the daughters, Mary, the eldest, followed the occupation of a teacher, and died in 1865, aged fifty-nine. Eliza, second daughter, was married to Mr Brown, teacher, Edinburgh, who died in 1837, and was survived by his widow for fifty-seven years. Janet Catharine, third daughter, was married first to Mr Robert Aitken, Kirkcaldy, and secondly to the Rev. John Taylor, M.D. and D.D., of Auchtermuchty, Toronto (Canada) where he was professor, and Busby. After resigning the latter charge

he removed to Edinburgh, where he died in 1880. His widow survived him for a period of five years, and died at the age of sixty-seven."

It may not be out of place to add the tribute of respect which Mr Richardson pays to one of his old teachers, Mr W. Mackinlay. "To a fine presence he added the qualities of a gentleman, a scholar, and a most excellent teacher. Under his guidance Freuchie school was raised to a high pitch of excellence, and boasted of a sixth form which would not have disgraced the sixth form of any public school. No doubt the talent existed in the boys, but it was evolved and developed by the conduct and high qualifications of the master. He resigned the mastership of Freuchie school in 1828, and died soon after of consumption, in his thirty-fifth year."

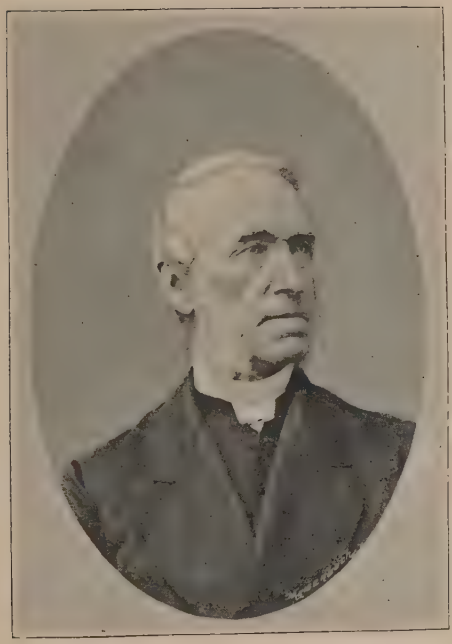
CHAPTER IX.

MR GRAY'S MINISTRY.

LIKE many another good man, Mr Richardson was more appreciated after his removal; and the congregation gladly seized the opportunity of showing their respect for his memory by defraying his funeral expenses. When the Presbytery met at Freuchie a few weeks afterwards, the congregation offered to pay the full stipend to Mrs Richardson up to Whitsunday, provided the Presbytery would supply the pulpit during that time. The Presbytery proposed to supply on every alternate Sabbath, and this was afterwards cordially agreed to.

CALL DECLINED.

At the same meeting, on 21st February, 1837, the Presbytery granted a petition for moderation in a call, the stipend offered being £90. This shows that in less than a month after Mr Richardson's death the congregation must have been prepared to make choice of his successor; and on the 8th of March Mr John Russell, probationer, Glasgow, was unanimously elected, the call being signed by 142 members and 32 adherents. Mr Russell must have been a popular preacher, for the the call from Freuchie was one of four which he had received in quick succession. He preferred Hexham, in Northumberland, to Rousay, Orkney, and Freuchie to Hexham; but he ultimately de-



Rev. John Gray

cided in favour of Bucklyvie, in Stirlingshire. He was ordained there in the following July, and retained the affection of his people till his death in 1858—the fifty-fourth year of his age, and twenty-second of his ministry.

MR GRAY CALLED.

It was not till 10th October that the congregation again met for the election of a minister; and this time their choice fell upon Mr John Gray, probationer. Mr Gray was born in the village of Doune, in Perthshire. He was brought up under the ministry of the Rev. John M'Kerrow, D.D., of Bridge of Teith, famous as the historian of the Secession Church. Entering Glasgow University in 1825, and the Secession Hall in 1830—where he studied under Professors Dick, Mitchell, and Duncan—he was licensed by the Presbytery of Falkirk and Stirling in 1834. His call, which was cordial, was signed by 140 members and 35 adherents, and was supported by Messrs John Henderson and Alexander Storrar, commissioners. It was sustained by the Presbytery at Rathillet on the occasion of the Rev. James Borwick's ordination, 11th October, 1837, and accepted by Mr Gray at Cupar on 2nd January, 1838.

HIS ORDINATION.

On 17th January, the anniversary of Mr Richardson's death, the Presbytery met at Freuchie for the ordination of his successor, the Rev. John Rankine, of Cupar, being moderator for the day. Mr Gray's minister, Mr M'Kerrow, opened the proceedings with praise and prayer; Mr Borwick, as the most recently ordained minister in the Presbytery, preached the ordination sermon from Rev. xiv. 6; and, after answering the questions of the formula, Mr Gray was solemnly set apart to the office of the ministry. For more than forty years he faithfully discharged, single-handed, the duties of that office.

MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

The first noteworthy event in the second ministry was the formation of a Missionary Society in the congregation. Six months before Mr Richardson's death the Session had agreed to make an attempt in that direction; but perhaps the efforts of the people were too much concentrated upon the building of the "subscription school" in the village for such an attempt to succeed. Six months after Mr Gray's ordination a society was formed, and it was resolved to make a collection on the first Sabbath of every month, but it seems to have languished and expired; for in May, 1846, the formation of a Missionary Society was again spoken of, and again in October of the following year. On 15th November, 1847, it was agreed to call a congregational meeting to consider the matter. But the load of debt pressed so heavily that the effort, if not abandoned, was only partially successful. Missionary boxes were placed at the church door, but at a congregational meeting held in September, 1852, it was decided that the cause of missions should not be recommended to the people during the liquidation of the debt. Even after the debt was removed, the only step in advance was the consequent removal of this restriction. Such timid policy was short-sighted, for it has been proved beyond dispute that liberal support of missionary enterprise helps rather than hinders a congregation's financial prosperity.

SPIRITUAL PROGRESS.

We cannot glance over that part of the Session records which deals with the earlier years of the second ministry without admiring the efforts of the Session to secure the greater spiritual prosperity of the congregation. The Session met frequently, and at many of its meetings "most

of the time was spent in devotional exercises." The following entry shows that minister and elders alike were filled with a desire for the more speedy advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom among the people of their charge :—

"Freuchie Manse, July 26th, 1839.

"The Session met for devotional exercises, and considered, according to a recommendation from the Synod, what measures might be adopted to promote a revival of religion in the congregation. Agreed that a sermon on that subject be preached upon the first Sabbath of August, and that a prayer-meeting during the interval of public worship be held in the church every Lord's-day."

This prayer-meeting continued for many years, and was a source of much blessing. Many of the members from a distance welcomed such an opportunity of improving an hour which had too often been misspent. And although the congregation is not now so widely scattered, the prayer-meeting might be revived with advantage. The Session also resolved, some time after, "to be more diligent in dealing with irregular members of the church."

INTEMPERANCE.

The sin of intemperance occupied much of their attention, as well it might. Not only was it making havoc in the congregation, but it had entered the Session, and caused grievous scandal. In November, 1841, the Session determined to give themselves to "honest dealing with members suspected of being guilty of this sin." A few months later they seem to have reached clearer views of their duty ; and it is with sincere pleasure that we read the following minutes, breathing as they do a spirit far in advance of the dates under which they appear :—

"Freuchie, Feb. 1st, 1842.

" . . . Spent some time in deliberating about the best means of suppressing drunkenness, whether as a Session we would not for a limited time, as an example to others, entirely refrain from intoxicating liquors. Left undecided until a fuller meeting of Session."

"Freuchie, May 2nd, 1842.

"... Agreed to abstain for an indefinite period from all intoxicating liquors, and to encourage others to follow our example."

But our eye falls upon an entry a few pages further forward which leads us to exclaim, "Ye did run well, who did hinder you?"—

"Freuchie, June 6th, 1843.

"... Agreed to consider themselves not any longer as acting upon the principle of total abstinence from intoxicating liquors, but, at the same time, not to take any except when considered necessary (!) ..."

The Session was apparently satisfied that it had done its duty, and perhaps a little more, in grappling with the evil of intemperance, for we find no further reference to the subject being introduced for discussion. We admire them for the practical way in which they dealt with the drink problem, and their method is worthy of commendation, for is not "example better than precept?"

Not long after Mr Gray's ordination the people began to feel that it was about time something should be done to remove the burden of debt which had been lying so heavily upon them during the whole of the first ministry.

CLEARING OFF THE DEBT

Was no easy task in these days for such a poor congregation: yet we are sorry to read that it affected the springs of their liberality towards sister congregations. Under date of 26th September, 1842, we find the following:—"Agreed to call meeting of managers next month to consider about best plan of removing part of our debt. Agreed to make no collection on behalf of weak congregations, although recommended by the Synod, on account of our own debt pressing upon us." A meeting was accordingly held a month afterwards, at which it was resolved to recommend

for the approval of the congregation that boxes be placed at the church door for voluntary subscriptions towards removing the debt; but the congregation at its meeting preferred the plan of a monthly collection, made at the same time as the missionary collection. This plan apparently met with little success. In less than two years a deputation from the Board addressed the congregation on the subject, and laid before the members certain proposals, which, if adopted, would reduce the debt from £242 to £100. The members accepted these proposals, and to show that they meant business, subscribed £22 on the spot. In course of time the debt was reduced to £50. Then came (in 1852) a proposal from John Henderson, a member of Session; he would give £15 if the congregation would raise the remainder during the year. This offer was accepted, and they determined to try and raise the money by monthly collections at the church doors for three months. We suppose they were successful, for no further mention of debt is made in the minutes. It had burdened them for a period of about fifty years! Besides this long-standing larger debt, the congregation occasionally found themselves loaded with a smaller, yet no less discomforting, deficit on the yearly accounts. The means devised to wipe off one of these deficits is worthy of record. The minute of Session speaks for itself, and requires no comment—except to commend it to the favourable notice of ministers and congregations in like circumstances:—

"June 11, 1849. Mr James Russell, having given an account of the affairs of the congregation, stated that they were now in arrears of stipend £20. Mr Gray proposed that if a hundred members of the church were to agree to give one penny additional every Sabbath to the collection, or two hundred of them a halfpenny, that this would defray their debt, which proposal was *unanimously* agreed to."

The Clerk has not managed to state "which proposal"

was agreed to; perhaps it was left to the discretion of the congregation—wisely!

MINISTER'S LIBRARY.

In April, 1852, a communication was read from a Committee of Synod anent the formation of a minister's library by the congregation. The Synod offered £5 10s if the congregation agreed to add £4 10s. These terms were accepted at a meeting held for the purpose of discussing the proposal, and it was decided to take special collections to make up the required amount. Further on we read the following:—

"MINUTE CONCERNING MINISTER'S LIBRARY. Novr. 1853.—In the month of May, 1852, the congregation having accepted of the proposals of the Synod to form a Minister's Library, the sum of £2 16s 10½d was raised by a public collection . . . and in August 16s 5½d—in all £3 13s 4d. The sum of £4 was made up from private sources . . . and in October, 1853, another collection was made, amounting to £1. Purchased two new books with the remainder—10s."

Of that library about 30 volumes still remain to adorn the minister's study.

The period of Mr Gray's ministry may be looked upon as a

TIME OF TRANSITION.

Old customs, manners, and forms of worship were passing away. Formerly the people were accustomed to long prayers, long sermons (generally on theological and "confessional" points), long services, and strict Sabbath etiquette. Now, we have short prayers, short sermons, short services, and great freedom of behaviour. In these respects the church has but reflected the spirit of the times. In many other ways also the church caught up the new spirit of enterprise and enquiry which set in along with the development of scientific research. As men

rubbed against each other more, they gradually lost the prejudices begotten of isolation. They saw that purity of worship did not necessarily mean a cast-iron method of simplicity which had to resist every innovation; and thus a larger spirit was developed amongst the people. The progress of the nineteenth century is due very much to the acceptance of the proposition,—A new thing may be a good thing.

In the years of this ministry we see nearly all the changes introduced which distinguish the old and the present methods of public worship. As, for example, in the election of elders, the communion service, the introduction of hymnals, the institution of choirs, change of method of discipline, change in the attitude of worship.

In a previous chapter we referred to the mode of electing elders which was in vogue during the first ministry. No change occurred until 1859-60, when, instead of the separate "quarters" of the congregation being called together, each to appoint its own elder or elders, we find the members handing in the names of those they wished to appoint at the church door, though still voting by "quarters." However, at the next election in 1866, while the same plan of nomination is adopted, the members no longer vote by quarters. The reason is not far to seek. The country members, formerly a considerable number, had decreased so greatly through joining other and nearer churches, that the division of the congregation into quarters was no longer just, so far as their representation in the Session was concerned. This newer system remained in force until recent years, when it was again altered for that now practised—namely, nomination and election by ballot, as in municipal elections.

COMMUNION SERVICES.

During the same period many changes took place in the services which were observed at the communion season. Up till 1842 there were three communions in the year, but for nine years thereafter four were observed. A change was made in February, 1851, when three was again the number fixed, and at that number they have remained ever since.

The fast-day, preparatory to the sacrament, was observed long ago in Falkland parish on Wednesday, but about the middle of this century it became movable, and we find it observed on Thursday, again on Wednesday, and finally on Friday in the year 1878. It ceased to be observed as a fast-day in 1880, because it was becoming usual to look upon it as a holiday. Besides the fast-day service, another preparatory service was held on Saturday afternoon, and here also we find influences at work changing the hour. For example, in 1848 the hour of service was 2.30; in June, 1850, it was altered to five; later on to three o'clock; and in 1884 to six o'clock. This is the only service preparatory to or succeeding the communion that still remains from these olden days. Perhaps it also is doomed to disappear. We pray not, but who can say? The Monday service succeeding the communion was still more quickly affected by modern influences, and disappeared. As early as November, 1848, we read a minute of Session wherein it is recorded that the Monday service is to be abolished. Apparently they thought better of it, for in June, 1864, we find the Session talking of changing the hour from the afternoon to the evening. When it was finally abolished we do not know, but it seems to have been shortly after the date of Mr Pollock's ordination.

THE HYMNAL.

As was generally the case all over Scotland, the introduction of a hymnal into the public worship of the sanctuary was at first strenuously resisted in Freuchie. The old people did not believe in these "new-fangled" tunes; still less in these compositions which they called "human hymns." One day the precentor (this is about the forties) introduced a new psalm tune which went with a livelier measure than usual, and many of the members rose, lifted their books, and walked out of the church! The old fashion was not to be broken through so easily. It must, therefore, have been with some trepidation that Sessions in 1844 began to consider the new hymnal which had been sent down by the Synod. After one or two adjourned meetings, the Freuchie Session agreed to recommend it with three suggestions, one of which was that, "with few exceptions, all the hymns should have the common metre;" another, "that the price should not exceed one shilling." No further mention of the hymnal is made till 1852, when the Session agreed to leave the matter in the hands of the congregation, who finally adopted it.

LATER COMMUNION TOKEN.

In bringing this rather long chapter to a close, we think it better to mention the dates of certain changes and events, without making any comment :—

1847. Formation of a choir or "band."
1863. Presentation of four communion cups and a flagon to the congregation by Mr Thomas Lumsden.
1876. Private rebuke before the Session substituted for public rebuke.
1878. Change in the attitude of worship—standing during praise instead of sitting.
1881. Cards introduced, to be used instead of tokens.

CHAPTER X.

THE NEW CHURCH.

THE changing taste of this period is also indicated in the large number of new churches which were erected throughout Scotland, in place of the square and bald-looking structures of the olden times. The people of Freuchie were not behind their neighbours, and in 1867 resolved to build a new church more in accordance with modern ideas of taste and beauty. Not that they despised the old building; but it had served its day and generation, and was looked upon as somewhat antiquated in its arrangements and architecture. Accordingly, at a meeting of the congregation held on 9th April, 1867, it was resolved to build a church of not less than 500 sittings. A large committee was nominated to see the work executed. Collectors also were appointed to uplift subscriptions once a month to defray the cost.

The first business of the committee was to settle in what style the church was to be built, and a small committee paid a visit to Dunfermline and Leslie to inspect one or two of the churches. They reported that they saw no church suitable for their requirements, at the same time recommending that the exterior should be similar to that of Markinch Free Church. The next flight the committee took was much longer. They went all the way to Govan to inspect a mission church, and were so

favourably impressed that they unanimously recommended the new church to be built after the same style. When their plans were fairly matured, they found themselves facing a fresh difficulty. The site chosen for the church was part of the common to the south of the village, where the Established Church now stands. But a rumour got abroad that it would be very unsafe to build there, on account of insecurity of tenure; and on further information being sought by the committee, they discovered they could be turned out or sold off at any time within forty years of building. Naturally they at once turned their attention to a more eligible site, and at last resolved to build upon the spot where the church now stands.

They did not act without encouragement. A generous friend was found in Mr Thomas of Forthar, who offered a contribution of £50 towards the funds, as well as the use of his carts to drive the lime from the quarries free of charge, an offer which, it is needless to say, was gratefully accepted by a struggling congregation. After all the estimates were handed in, it was found necessary to cut them down somewhat, as the total sum was above that which the congregation was prepared to spend.

LAYING THE FOUNDATION STONE.

The following extract from the managers' minutes will be read with interest:—

"16th October, 1867.

"In accordance with previous arrangements, the laying of the foundation stone of the new church took place this afternoon, at five o'clock. The meeting was opened with praise by singing a portion of the 132nd Psalm, after which the Rev. John Rankine, Cupar, engaged in prayer. The Rev. John Gray, pastor of the congregation, then delivered an address on the origin and past history of the church (said address enclosed in the jar). Mr Thomas Lumsden, having been chosen at last meeting of committee to lay the stone, then stepped

forward with the trowel and square, and proceeded to lay it. Before depositing the jar in the stone (which will be found in the buttress next to the front door on the south side, — feet from the base course), he read over to a large audience a list of the various articles contained in it, viz., the leading periodicals and newspapers, also the coins in use at the present day, the names of the elders, managers, subscribers, collectors, building committee, precentor, and church officer, and the Rev. Mr Gray's carte-de-visite.* He then lowered the jar and adjusted the stone, and, after three mystic knocks, declared the stone duly laid, which drew forth a hearty burst of cheering from the meeting. The cheering having subsided, Mr Gray then offered up a very impressive prayer, which closed the proceedings at the building. Mr Gray then intimated that the brethren on the platform beside him—viz., Rev. Messrs John Rankine, Cupar; Hugh Barr, Kettle; Smith, Pitlessie; Murray, Burntisland; and Dodds, Kettle—would deliver addresses suitable to the occasion in the old church, whither they would now adjourn. Mr Gray occupied the chair, and appropriate speeches were given by the above-named gentlemen."

Soon afterwards the managers were under the necessity of borrowing £700 to carry on the work, and against contingencies. Things went on smoothly and well, and at last, on the 1st of November, 1868, the church was opened for public worship. It proved to be a large and commodious edifice, with a handsome front (see frontispiece), and capable of holding 550 with comfort, and another 100 at a pinch. Mr Thomas Lumsden, manufacturer, presented the congregation with a bell, which still rings from the belfry, and thus added another to the many kindnesses they had received at his hands, for he was a generous donor to the building fund. On the opening day, Dr Finlayson, Edinburgh, preached forenoon and evening, and Mr Gray in the afternoon. It is recorded in the Session minutes that, "although the day was unfavourable, the attendance was large, and the sum of £104 was collected,"—a sum which

* We have it on credible authority that there are also in the jar copies of the ladies' fashion-plates then current!

will favourably compare with the large collections made now-a-days at similar functions.

PAYING OFF THE DEBT.

The congregation now found themselves with a serious responsibility resting upon them; they were £460 in debt. Yet these figures show how nobly the people had done. By the month of July, 1869, they had raised altogether £1136, and that with but little outside help; while the total cost of the church had been £1574. The first to come to their aid were the trustees of the Ferguson Bequest Fund, who proposed to grant £50 toward liquidating the debt, provided the congregation raised £100 within a year. This proposal was accepted, and at the annual meeting held in July, 1871, it was announced that the debt had been reduced to £300. Even then they did not cease their exertions, for at the same meeting it was agreed to have extra collections at the church door to reduce the debt still further. Soon afterwards another kind friend stepped forward in the person of Mr William Foote, Glasgow, who offered to raise £75, provided the congregation collected £150 within a year. They accepted the offer, and in October, 1874, the debt was only £75. And now, when within sight of the goal, they seem to have turned faint-hearted, and to pay off £75 they resorted to the last expedient—a bazaar! It was held in the schoolroom in May, 1875, and the sum of £120 was obtained. The sum was more than they required, but they applied the balance towards cleaning and painting the church. Thus, in less than eight years, the congregation had collected a sum of money amounting to nearly £1800 with very little outside aid, and during that time had maintained the church and its organisations in their usual state of efficiency. Surely they had reason to thank God and take courage.

Rev. John Pollock

CHAPTER XI.

MR POLLOCK'S MINISTRY.

AFTER forty years of work in the congregation, Mr Gray began to feel the burden of advancing years tell heavily upon him, and it was resolved to obtain some assistance for him during the summer of 1878. Accordingly, Mr John F. Blair, student of divinity, was engaged for some months in this duty, taking a service on the Sabbath, and otherwise helping Mr Gray. He was very acceptable to the people, and they still talk of him in affectionate terms. Mr Blair is now minister of John Street congregation, Glasgow.

This temporary aid proved of great service to Mr Gray, and he experienced its value to such an extent as led him to look for permanent assistance. At a meeting of elders and managers held on 29th December, 1878, he intimated "that he felt himself unable to carry on all the work of the ministry, and proposed that a

COLLEAGUE AND SUCCESSOR

should be provided for him." This proposal was adopted, and at a meeting held subsequently, presided over by the Rev. John Rankine, Cupar, several resolutions were mutually agreed upon to allow the proposal to be carried into practical effect. Commissioners were also appointed to the Presbytery to obtain its sanction to these resolutions. Some time after

the congregation met for moderation, and unanimously elected Mr George Strang, M.A., who preferred Newport Road congregation, Middlesborough. Mr Matthew Dickie was afterwards called, but preferred Sanquhar.

In November, 1879, Messrs Andrew Thom, George Adamson, and Andrew Pryde appeared before the Presbytery as commissioners from Freuchie congregation asking for moderation. They offered as a stipend from the congregation £125, with supplement of £35 from the Home Board, and one share of the Surplus Fund, making in all £200, and £20 for house rent. The Presbytery agreed to the prayer of the petitioners, and appointed a day for moderation. On that day a unanimous call was addressed to

MR JOHN POLLOCK,

probationer, and afterwards presented to the Presbytery, subscribed by 228 members and 85 adherents. At the same meeting of Presbytery, Mr Pollock intimated his acceptance of the call.

Mr Pollock is a native of Glasgow, and was originally connected with Free St James' Church. He became a Sabbath School teacher at the age of twelve, and took his University course in his native city, where also he was assistant to the late Rev. Dr Wallace, East Campbell Street Church, a leading temperance advocate. He passed through the divinity hall while it was still being presided over by the late Dr Cairns and Dr John Ker. While a divinity student, he had charge of the Presbyterian Church at Lindisfarne, St Cuthbert's "Holy Island." He was licensed to preach the gospel by Glasgow Presbytery in 1879, and did not long remain on the probationers' list, as he received the call to Freuchie at the close of the same year.

took place on the 7th of January, 1880. The Rev. Mr Mitchell of Cupar preached from Revelations xxii., 16, "The bright and morning star." Having received the right hand of fellowship, Mr Pollock was addressed in suitable terms by Mr Anderson of Ceres, and Mr Bell of Auchtermuchty addressed the congregation. A public soiree was held in the evening, when the church was crowded, and Mr Pollock received the customary gifts.

With the ordination of Mr Pollock a new era of life began for the congregation. We have already referred to the many changes which took place in the ecclesiastical sphere in Scotland during the second half of this century. Many of these found their way to Freuchie, but many others were never heard of. Especially is this true of what are now termed church organisations. These were almost unknown in the village, the only meetings outside of the regular services being the prayer meeting, which very few attended, and the Sabbath school, which was well attended. There was thus a large sphere of labour upon which the energies of the young colleague might be expended, and he did not fail in rising to the occasion. Within six weeks of his ordination the Session had agreed to divide the congregation into districts, each under the supervision of an elder; to appoint missionary collectors, one or two for each of said districts; to establish a Dorcas Society to look after the poor; besides, it had agreed to the constitution of the newly started Bible class. A year afterwards, the Session unanimously sanctioned the formation of a Band of Hope, and agreed to give the Sabbath school teachers liberty to begin a library in connection with the school (started with 193 new volumes). In the same year (1881) a "Young Men's Christian Association" was formed in connection with the

congregation, and a hall was opened at West Forthar for evangelistic and Sabbath school purposes. Nor can we omit to mention the appointment of a ladies' Zenana committee, to work in conjunction with the Presbytery's Zenana committee. Nor yet that in November we have the constitution of a proposed Sabbath School Society presented to the Session for approval, and agreed to without amendment. Another very popular movement was the organisation of a Young Women's Christian Association.

HIS POPULARITY.

The energy with which Mr Pollock conducted all these various efforts was no less remarkable than the success with which they were attended. His Bible class, for example, was exceedingly popular. And it is not so much to be wondered at, when we consider that everything was new to the people. Yet, even that can hardly account for the large number of people of all ages who attended, so that, as one remarked, "it was more like a third service than anything else." But Mr Pollock had novel methods as well as a strong personality. The prayer-meeting also assumed new importance, and was largely attended. In all these efforts he received strong support from a body of workers he had attracted to himself. Not that he got all his own way. On the contrary, he found his path often blocked by those of a conservative nature, who looked askance at these innovations, and jealously guarded existing antiquities. But, by the force of reason and a strong will, he accomplished mighty things. Nor was it only in the way of organisation that reform was carried out, but also in the laying down of rules for the guidance of the members in conducting the ordinary affairs of the congregation. Indeed, during the five years of his ministry, the Session was so overwhelmed with business, that it was often eleven o'clock at night ere they separated.

of the congregation prospered during this time. Before Mr Pollock came the annual income for the three previous years averaged £225. In December, 1881, the amount raised was £367; in 1882, £373. The missionary and benevolent contributions also increased, even in greater ratio, and the members began to take a deeper interest in the work of foreign missions. Undoubtedly, to Mr Pollock must be given the honour of teaching the congregation how to give, even although the people sometimes rebelled under his impetuous sway. But the burden of his message was always the same—a living Christianity means a living liberality—a conclusion not easily refuted.

Whatever may have been their sentiments at that time, it is certain that now the congregation are ready to recognise how deeply indebted they are to Mr Pollock for the stirring up of a new life within them, and for their subsequent prosperity. Although his ministry was comparatively short (only five years), it has left a deep impress upon the history of the church. Nearly all the organisations which he instituted are still being carried on with more or less vitality; most of them, we believe, will remain to keep his work in memory.

In the beginning of 1885 Mr Pollock

RECEIVED A CALL,

which he finally accepted, from the new United Presbyterian congregation of Merchiston, Edinburgh. After labouring there successfully for some years, he was translated to Glasgow (Shamrock Street), as successor to Dr John Dobie, where he still ministers to a large congregation.

Mr Pollock is well known for his work among the young, and was for some years clerk of the Synod's Com-

mittee on the Care of Youth, and largely developed its scheme. He is one of the chief originators of the church's Young Men and Women's Guild, and drafted its constitution. At present he is convener of the Glasgow Presbytery's Care of Youth Committee, and is also well known as the author of the little handbook "Stranger than Fiction"—a history of the U. P. Church. But perhaps he is most widely known in connection with the Christian Endeavour Union, an American Society, whose aims he has zealously adopted, and as zealously promulgates; and for its Scottish branch, he has written the words and music of a song which promises to become the Scottish Christian Endeavour national anthem.

CHAPTER XII.

IN MEMORIAM.

WE may somewhat anticipate events by referring to one which occurred more than two years after Mr Pollock's removal—we mean the death of Mr Gray, the senior pastor of the congregation. During the five years of Mr Pollock's colleagueship, Mr Gray had been associated with him in the oversight of the congregation, and resided at the manse, while the junior pastor's residence was The Riggs, a farmhouse nearly a mile from the village. This arrangement was found to be very inconvenient. Accordingly, a new one was entered into before the congregation called another colleague, by which Mr Gray agreed to retire from the manse, and leave it to be occupied by the junior pastor. Mr Gray took up his residence in Cupar, where he "continued the much-loved work of visitation in connection with the congregation of his old friend, the Rev. John Rankine, who ordained him."* He did not linger long about the streets of Cupar, but departed this life on the 10th of December, 1887, in his seventy-seventh year, and the fiftieth of his ministry—indeed, within a few weeks of his jubilee. On the day of the funeral (the 13th) religious services were conducted in the church by the Rev. Mr Milroy, junior pastor, assisted by the Rev. Messrs Nicholson, Kettle; Fraser, Freuchie;

* *Missionary Record*, January, 1888.

and Brown, Markinch. "As a token of respect for the aged minister, the factories were closed, and a large company passed out of the church, under the tolling bell, and followed the beloved remains to their last resting-place in Falkland churchyard."* On the Sabbath following, Mr Rankine, by appointment of Presbytery, preached the funeral sermon from the well-known text, "I am the resurrection and the life." Towards the close of his discourse he spoke as follows :—

"As a preacher, Mr Gray was characterised by soundness in the faith, and an earnest desire for the salvation of his hearers. His ordinary style was quiet, tasteful, and persuasive, and admirably fitted to interest and enlighten. . . . As a Christian pastor, your late minister held a very high place, visiting the families from house to house, comforting with all kindness the sick and dying, and warning those who were out of the way. . . . Of the domestic life of the pastor I cannot speak at great length, but this I may with all confidence affirm, that the life in the manse was in all keeping with the preaching from the pulpit, and with the Bible description of the households of the righteous. . . . During the months of autumn and the commencement of winter his disease made visible progress, and feeling that his end was approaching, he sought to prepare himself and those around him for the final change. Losing all interest in worldly things, he gave himself to prayer on behalf of himself and his relations, and specially for this congregation, to which he had ministered for so many years." The attendance at the services was very large, and the addresses solemn and most impressive.

At a meeting of Session held in February, the following minute was read and engrossed :—

* *Missionary Record.*

"In recording its sense of the loss which the Session has felt in the death of the senior pastor of the congregation, they would return thanks to God for his long and blameless life. For fully forty years he was able faithfully and earnestly to preach the gospel from Sabbath to Sabbath, and undertook all the ministerial work of the congregation. During all the years that he went in and out among the people, he always maintained the character of a Christian minister, and thus added the weight of his exemplary life to his utterances from the pulpit. He bore his trials and family bereavements with Christian submission and peaceful resignation to the Divine will. His duties as a pastor were diligently and conscientiously discharged. The sick and the aged were tenderly and earnestly cared for by him. He was very attentive to the poor of the congregation, and exerted himself to get their wants supplied. When no longer able to discharge the full duties of his office, he did not fail to take a lively interest in the life and work of the congregation. To the very last his thoughts were about his people, and he was delighted when he heard of their welfare and prosperity. He bore his last illness without murmuring, and knowing that his end was near, he gave expression to the hope that maketh not ashamed. His end was peace. His last hours were soothed by the presence of his devoted daughter, who gently nursed him during all his infirmities."

Only one member of Mr Gray's family survives, Miss Jessie Gray, who resides in Cupar. We cannot do better than conclude this chapter with a sketch of Mr Gray's character, written by Mr Pollock, his colleague for five years, and therefore written by one who had many opportunities of finding out his strong, as well as his weak points.

"A CANNY MAN."

"He's a canny man, John Gray." The phrase meant much, and in its entire significance it was just. It might be inflected—by a native—to indicate that he was not without ability; without inflection it meant that he made virtuous use of what ability he had. It credited him with a certain shrewdness; well under the control of conscience, and so incapable of over-reaching itself. His heart was in

the right place; certainly he did not wear it upon his sleeve. Thoroughly capable of managing his own business, he was, at the same time, always ready to take a fatherly interest in the affairs of others.

As a preacher he was, in every sense, scrupulously careful in his handling of the Bible, and showed no Knox-like tendency to "ding the pulpit to blads." His discourses were fully and very neatly written in old-fashioned short-hand, and carefully committed to memory, as was the almost invariable Secession custom. He uttered his sentences in a soft monotone, which had a most soothing influence upon his hearers. During his whole ministry, it may be safely asserted, he never preached a sermon that gave offence to any one. He might mildly denounce the obsolete iniquity of Ephesus, but direct reference to Freuchie sins did not lie in his line.

Talking of Ephesus, doubtless he was mainly responsible for the amazing veneration in which the memory of its cautious town-clerk is still held in the congregation. He lived, at all events, in the belief that what is quickly done must be ill done. No sane man ought to have anything to do with a "reform" till it had been subjected to the test of time; after that, he might give it a modified approval. "Are ye a teetotaller?" he enquired once of a blushing bridegroom. The company sniggered, and there was some winking behind backs. The young man, fearing the minister's sarcasm—he had an intermittent gift that way—pled not guilty. The reply took us all by surprise: "Well, I would advise you both to be teetotallers. I'm not one myself, and I'm too old to change. But I'm no' sure but the young minister here is maybe no' so far wrong after all!" A dead silence followed, in which we heard each other thinking. He had lived long enough to see the excellence of "teetotalism"—for others.

But the phrase which most frequently expressed the popular estimate meant also that he was of a gentle disposition and charitable spirit. He was never harsh in his judgments. The erring were treated by him with sympathetic kindness; albeit he sometimes mistook an evil-smelling character for smoking flax, and stout impenitence for a bruised reed. "Better err on the safe side," he often said. Still, he was not unfaithful. He knew how to rebuke sin, though gently. Discipline was tenderly exercised. It never fell as a correcting rod; yet doubtless there are many to-day who are ready to testify that it was a means of grace.

He magnified his office, and had no sympathy with any interpretation of Scripture which tended to obliterate the distinction between ministers and elders. He had as little sympathy with "clericalism." His people loved him as they loved each other, neither more nor less, for they regarded him as one of themselves. He moved among them continually, eschewing such a formality as "pastoral visitation." "Well, Janet, hoo are ye the day?" he would enquire, latch in hand, the judicious mixture of Attic and Doric setting the guidwife quite at ease, while not suffering her to forget that she was speaking with the minister. "Gey an' weel, Maister Gray; thenk ye. Hoo's a' at the manse?" Sometimes he would step inside, and enquire more particularly after the welfare of the family; but he seldom engaged in prayer, except at the sick-bed. To the suffering and the mourning he was most assiduously attentive, and his visits brought sunshine into the chamber of sickness and sorrow. He himself had graduated in the school of affliction. Never garrulous about himself, he dropped hints occasionally which seemed to lend colour to the story that his student days were not without struggle; and once he shared with his gentle wife the burden of

bereavement in the loss of their elder daughter; and, when he was less able to bear it, there fell upon his heart the still heavier sorrow of widowhood.

For husband and wife were like-minded. Rumour said that the minister had his love-story if he cared to tell it, yet it is certain his married life was one of quiet happiness. His wife was, like himself, of the old school. She must have been a beautiful bride, and is still remembered as a handsome matron, before she became a confirmed invalid. During the later years of her life she seldom appeared in church, or indeed outside of her own home. There she was to be found, even in her last frailty, looking well to the ways of her household. Call at what hour you might, the same unchangeable old lady met you, her quaint side-curls wreathing a face in which there still lingered something of girlish sweetness. The minister and his wife loved in the good, old-fashioned way, and they lived such a truly united life, that they developed a mutual resemblance, even in outward feature, which was sometimes most striking, for they looked more like brother and sister than husband and wife.

Those who did not know the minister well—and none knew him fully—imagined that his bereavement brought him little sorrow. But he could not weep aloud. Few saw his tears. He went in and out among his people as usual, but they saw him ageing rapidly. Events recorded in another chapter necessitated his removal to Cupar; but he did not tread its quiet streets long. His loneliness was cheered by the fellowship of his only daughter, who nursed him tenderly while he needed her care, and saw him laid beside her mother and her sister in Falkland graveyard.

A country funeral reveals unerringly the popular estimation of the departed. That day the company was large and representative; and as men of different churches

walked home, arm-in-arm, they found in his uneventful life little material for discussion, but the most common climax was a tribute sympathetically uttered, as eloquent as it was simple: "'Deed aye, he was a canny man John Gray!"

CHAPTER XIII.

SUBSEQUENT HISTORY.

THE recent history of the congregation is well-known to all connected with it, and may therefore be dismissed in few words. After the translation of Mr Pollock the congregation entered into a new arrangement with Mr Gray, with a view to obtaining the manse for the junior pastor. They wished at first to reduce his allowance by £10 in the year, so as to allow of a better stipend being offered to their new minister, but the Presbytery refused to sanction such a proposal, although Mr Gray expressed his willingness to acquiesce in the arrangement, provided the Presbytery saw fit. Finally, when asking for liberty of moderation, the congregation agreed to give their junior pastor £160 and the manse, without making any diminution in the allowance made to Mr Gray. At a meeting held on 5th October, 1885, a unanimous call was addressed to

MR JAMES MILROY,

probationer. Messrs Thom, Dick, and Grant were appointed to support the call before the Presbytery, and at its next meeting Mr Milroy intimated his acceptance of the call.

Mr Milroy is a native of Glasgow, but was brought up and educated in Kirkcudbright. He attended the University of Glasgow, and, having passed through the usual curri-

Rev. James Milroy

culum both there and at the divinity hall, was licensed to preach the gospel by the Presbytery of Glasgow. Before his ordination he was engaged in gathering together a congregation at Broxburn, and also at Cowdenbeath. He received calls from the congregations of South Ronaldshay in Orkney, Blairlogie, and Freuchie, and finally decided to accept the call from Freuchie. He was ordained on the 6th of January, 1886. The sermon was preached by Mr Nicholson, Kettle, from Gal. v. 11, "The offence of the Cross." Mr Bell, Auchtermuchty, addressed the newly ordained minister, and Mr Macnee the congregation. In the evening the usual public soiree was held, and was very largely attended.

During Mr Milroy's ministry nothing especially noteworthy occurred. The congregation made quiet and satisfactory progress in all its organisations, and the liberality of the people remained undiminished. They made an addition to the manse, which cost above £200, and paid off the debt in a year or two. For eight years Mr Milroy ministered to the people, and was, and is, held by them in high estimation, especially for his gifts in the pulpit. He possesses a facile utterance, a splendid voice, and no mean oratorical gifts; so that the congregation were not surprised when he received a call from Pleasance U. P. Church in Edinburgh, in the beginning of 1894. This call was accepted, to the general regret of all the members, and Mr Milroy preached his farewell discourse on the last Sabbath of April. He was inducted to the Pleasance on 21st May of the same year.

After a vacancy of five months, a call was presented to the present minister,

MR GEORGE LOWE,

probationer, and he was ordained on the 5th of December,

1894. He is a native of Musselburgh, and received his education there, passed through the usual University and Hall classes in Edinburgh, and graduated in Arts and Divinity. For a year after finishing his Hall course he had charge of the mission station at Straiton, four miles from Edinburgh. The members have now transferred their quarters to Loanhead, where a new church has been built.

At the ordination service the sermon was preached by the Rev. J. H. Leckie, Cupar, from 1st Cor. xiv. 8, "For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?" and Mr Dobson addressed the newly ordained minister and the congregation.

The only feature during these latter years falling to be recorded in the history of the congregation, is the painting, redecorating, and heating of the church, which was carried out during the vacancy. The total cost was £106, and it was entirely paid off within a year without the congregation falling behind in other respects. The old spirit of liberalty is still alive in the congregation; long may it continue!

In order to show clearly the position in which the congregation stands in its hundredth year, with regard to organisation and finance, we here present the leading features of the report for 1895. (All the figures are as at 31st December, 1895; all names, offices, &c., as at date of publication).

MEMBERS OF SESSION.

Rev. George Lowe, B.D., *Moderator.*

Thomas Blyth.	Allan Mill, *Session-Clerk.*
George Braid.	James Miller, *Treasurer.*
Arthur Burt.	David Rymer.
John Dick.	George Seth.
William Meiklejohn.	Christopher Storrar.

Rev. George Lowe

Managers.

William Meiklejohn.	James Thom.
Hugh Watt.	Archibald Aitken, jun., *Treasurer.*
Arthur Burt.	John Grant, *Chairman.*
John Law, sen.	James Dowie.
Allan Mill.	Walter Ness.
Andrew Pryde	William Haxton.
David Rymer, *Secretary.*	James Robertson.
David Archibald.	

Organisations.

Name.	*Work.*
Missionary Committee,	To superintend mission work and to allocate money collected for Home and Foreign Missions.
Zenana Mission Committee,	Collect money for mission work in India.
Psalmody Committee,	Superintend choir and psalmody.
Sabbath School Society,	Superintend work of the Sabbath School.
Young Men's Christian Association	Study of the Bible—Papers read by members.
Young Women's do.	Do. do.
Band of Hope,	Promotion of temperance principles.
Total Abstinence Union,	Do. do.
Bible Class,	Study of the Bible and church history.
Prayer Meeting,	Prayer and reflection.

Officers.

Church Officer,	Thomas Duncan.
Precentor,	Robert Morgan.

Finances.

Ordinary Income,	£291 17 11½
Extraordinary Income,	22 0 0
Sabbath School Society's Income,	12 19 0
Missionary and Benevolent Purposes,	34 5 11

Balance on hand, £54 1s 7d.

Number of Members, 278.

CHAPTER XIV.

CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS.

THE exact date of the formation of the congregation is not known, but it can be fixed approximately. First supply of sermon was granted on 16th December, 1794, but it was only occasional, and we suppose that on those days when no minister appeared, the members would trudge, some over the hill to Leslie, and others across the "Howe" to Auchtermuchty. From the first minute of Session it would appear that a congregation was formed about the time the first election of elders took place, and that event happened in the first week of 1796. Their ordination, two or three weeks later, may be regarded as the final act in the erection of the congregation. Accordingly, it was decided to observe the centenary sometime during the month of January, 1896.

SABBATH SERVICES.

The observance of the centenary began with special services on the 26th January. Professor Paterson, Edinburgh, preached in the forenoon an impressive and thoughtful discourse from Psalm xcvi. 6—"Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary." The pastor of the congregation occupied the pulpit in the afternoon, and preached from Psalm xliv. 1st and 3rd verses. In the evening there was a crowded attendance, and Mr Pollock delivered a vigorous

sermon from Psalm lxvi. 16th verse. At all the services references of a more or less direct nature were made to the interesting occasion; while, in the opening prayer in the forenoon, and the closing one at night, were included peculiarly solemn and touching thanksgivings for the past, and petitions for blessing in the future.

THE PUBLIC MEETING,

partaking of the nature of a soiree, was held on the Monday evening, the 27th. Mr Lowe presided over a large gathering, and there were also present on the platform the Rev. Benjamin Martin, Leslie; Rev. John Pollock; Rev. James Milroy; Rev. A. D. Sloan, St Andrews; Rev. Arthur Simmons, Kettle; Rev. Chas. Fraser, Established Church, Freuchie.

After the usual preliminaries, the Chairman gave a short sketch of the history of the congregation, referring more specially to its earlier days, and to the principles for which their fathers had contended.

Rev. Benjamin Martin, Leslie, then addressed the meeting. This is an occasion, he said, of the greatest interest, not only to the congregation, but to the church at large. The centenary of a congregation such as this ought to stir up gratitude in the retrospect, and hopeful resolution for the future. I was present ten years ago at the celebration of the 90th anniversary, and I am delighted to be present at the 100th anniversary also.

The question might well be put on such an occasion as this, How did the Secession Church arise? Its origin was due to a *prudential* movement. The Erskines themselves did not know the full meaning of their work. Nothing was further from their intention at first than to start a new denomination. The Scottish people had no idea of the importance of the Secession. It was looked upon by

many as only a petty squabble about matters of discipline; but God had a special purpose in it from the beginning to raise up in Scotland a testimony for truth which would have been overlooked or forgotten without a permanent organisation to give it satisfactory expression. It was a *religious* as well as a prudential movement. There was little or no gospel preached in many pulpits in the Establishment, and the people were thirsting for the water of life. There was a neglect of discipline both among the clergy and the members. False doctrine was allowed to pass unchallenged, and the standard of conduct was lowered. And one thing that aggravated these evils was that there was next to no toleration given to those who wished to correct them; for instead of exercising discipline on those who were accused of unsound teaching, the General Assembly reproved those who were striving to put things right. And it was found to be a *popular* as well as a religious movement. The enforcing of the Patronage Act deprived the Christian people of a right which they much valued. The Secession sought to restore to them that right, and the privilege was readily and largely taken advantage of. It has been said that the Secession Fathers were not voluntaries, and that therefore the United Presbyterian Church is under no obligation of consistency to make voluntaryism a bar to a comprehensive Presbyterian Union. The word voluntaryism, doubtless, had not been coined at that time; but the thing meant by the term was there in germ. It was not long in developing, and ultimately it grew up into the full stature of the great principle with which we are all familiar.

And this leads me to speak of the testimony of the Secession, and the benefits it has conferred on Scotland during the last 163 years. Its testimony was designed to be Scriptural; for while its doctrines were in accordance

with the Confession, they were stated and defended after the independent study of Scripture. In regard to the question of the province of the civil magistrate in relation to religion, the Associate Presbytery very early laid down principles which are in harmony with Scriptural voluntaryism. In 1743 it laid down this position: "If true religion became a part of the civil constitution, it inevitably follows that the Church became a part of the State; which doctrine, as it is absurd in itself, so it lays a plain foundation for Erastianism, overturning the distinction betwixt the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ and the kingdom of this world." Thus, ten years after the origin of the Secession, when the Erskines were still living, this voluntary position was laid down as one to be regarded as fundamental. The truth is, there has been a chain of voluntary testimony in the several branches of the United Presbyterian Church almost from their rise down to the present day. Then as to the benefits conferred by the Secession on Scotland, these have been inestimable. The Secession churches scattered over the country were witnesses for gospel truth amid prevailing darkness and defection. The democracy of a hundred years ago, loudly demanding civil rights, was brought under the influence of the Secession, which gave to them belonging to it their religious rights; so that the Secession may be said to have saved the democracy of that time from becoming an infidel, and converting it into a Christian democracy. The success of the Secession is its justification. Despised, oppressed, persecuted at times, it has thriven in a most remarkable manner, and matches itself in its strength with the Establishment.

We hear much of comprehensive unions, and it is asked, Why cannot the United Presbyterian Church unite with the Establishment? One reason is its distinctive history. We

cannot belie the work of our fathers; we cannot disown their testimonies. We cannot repudiate their history by sinking our identity as a church in a civil establishment of religion. Moreover, there is a controversy still unsettled which must be righteously closed ere they can take steps towards union. Sixty-three years ago the voluntary controversy arose, and its claims to a practical redress of grievances are still unsettled. Fifty-three years ago the Disruption gave emphasis to these claims, and up to this present they are still refused. Fifty years ago nearly, the union of the Secession and Relief—both branches holding clear views as to the unlawfulness of civil establishments of religion—gave hope that soon the separation might be effected between the Church and the State, and still the salutary reform is delayed. Thirty-three years ago the union negotiations were begun with high hopes of an early union between the Free and United Presbyterian Churches, but these hopes were wrecked on the rock of civil establishment of religion. Twenty-three years ago the abolition of the Law of Patronage renewed with redoubled earnestness the demand for disestablishment, but as yet that demand has been successfully resisted. Till that controversy is ended it is idle to anticipate an early reunion. The testimony of the United Presbyterian Church is not yet exhausted; it stands in the van on great principles. Its place it must continue to keep for the protection and furtherance of important interests in Scotland. Only when this obstacle is removed can it be safe or wise for our church to negotiate for incorporating union. Meanwhile, as we have a noble history of 163 years to look back upon—as you have a hundred years of congregational life to stimulate you—let us all so labour and so hold on to what we know to be the truth, that we shall be able to hand down to those coming after us the Secession banner

unsullied and victorious. Unions will come, but they can only come with a blessing when they are true to Christian and Scriptural principles.

In introducing Mr Pollock, the Chairman referred to his past connection with the congregation, and to the trouble he had been at to get information and documents relating to its past history.

Mr Pollock said that it was always a genuine pleasure to him to visit the place of his ordination, where he had spent five of the happiest years of his life. He congratulated the congregation on the happy circumstances in which it celebrated its hundredth birthday, and expressed the hope that the second century of its history might be even more fruitful than the first.

Why was the congregation in existence at all? He regarded it as a fitting time to ask such a question. They of the United Presbyterian Church did not very frequently hoist the denominational flag, while some other churches kept theirs continually flying. He did not blame the other churches for that. Far less could they blame them for showing their colours on such an occasion as the present. One could not sit long in an Established Church without being reminded that he was within "the National Zion." He might even be asked to join in the prayer—Scriptural, but founded on a somewhat shaky exegesis—that "no weapon formed against her should prosper." Nor could he attend many services in a Free Church without having some reference, more or less ingenious, to the Fathers of the Disruption. But it might be possible to attend many a United Presbyterian Church for a whole year without meeting with anything, outside the ordinary pulpit intimations, that would give the slightest inkling of denominational connection. The effect of such perpetual silence was not altogether good. It was apt to be misinterpreted. We

might lay the flattering unction to our souls that we are the most charitable religious community in Scotland. But let us be careful to distinguish between things that differ. Let us beware of confounding that broad sympathy which ought to characterise every Christian man, with that utter indifference to distinctive principles which denotes nothing but the absence of definite conviction, and is the veriest caricature of Christian charity. Nothing so effectually drives out the evil spirit of a narrow sectarianism, as the healthy development of an intelligent denominationalism.

And why should we hesitate to state and defend our position? Our history—the religious history of Scotland during the lifetime of this congregation—justifies that position. Of what are called "the three great Presbyterian Churches," we alone have held the ground of principle on which we took our stand in '47, when the United Presbyterian Church declared a policy which she had inherited alike from the Secession and the Relief. Other churches have moved, and have invited us to move. We are a church whose history is a history of unions; but not even for union can we move away from our position. Let it be said with all respect for our brethren of other communions; we have only to wait till they come to our position. The time is coming—sooner than most people imagine—when Scottish Presbyterianism will be re-united; and all the signs of the times go to show that the principles of the great Scottish Presbyterian Church of the future, will be substantially identical with the principles for which Erskine and Gillespie suffered, for which Marshall and Heugh contended, and for which our Church, and this congregation, stands to-day.

What manner of men were they who founded this congregation a hundred years ago? Some of their descendants are with us still. An answer to this query will

explain the existence of the congregation; for had they not been the men they were the congregation had not been at all. Here is their brief and pointed manifesto, taken from the venerable Session records:—

"They perceived that abuses had crept into the Established Church, on account of which they were much grieved, and which tended much to mar their edification, but which it was not in their power to reform. They therefore resolved to apply to the Associate Presbytery of Perth, which met there upon the 16th December, 1794, for one to be sent occasionally to preach unto them the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ."

We can read much between the lines here, much of prayer and fasting, of fierce conflict and bitter sacrifice. The day alone shall declare the full significance of that succinct statement. We should like them to have said more. But they were not men to waste words when they felt themselves called to action. They were made of good old Covenanting stuff. God grant us a revival of their spirit!

1. They were men of *piety*. The statement reminds us that the Secession itself, sixty years earlier, was cradled in an atmosphere of prayer. Few now-a-days will labour to deny that the spiritual strength and fervour of Scotland rallied to the banner that Ebenezer Erskine unfurled at Perth. The Secession, like the Disruption a century later, was the outcome of a revival of religion, and a protest against the prevailing "Moderatism" of the day. The men who met in William Scott's house over the way were men of piety. They may have been—to quote from the Secession covenant—"frequently perplexed with doubts and fears anent their actual believing," but they were genuine believers of the best type. They were godly men, and were so regarded by those who knew them best.

2. Consequently they were men of *principle*. Their faith was a faith of the most practical kind, that would

have carried them to the Grassmarket gallows if need were. They were men above suspicion of selfish or worldly motives. Their one desire was "to have preached unto them the everlasting gospel of Jesus Christ." The old parish kirk of Falkland was dear to them; they took pleasure in her very stones. There they had dedicated their children to the Lord, and in the kirkyard they themselves would one day lie beside the beloved dust of those gone before. But they heard the voice of God, and they would not be disobedient. They knew that their action would cut them off from many with whom they had held sweet fellowship, but they felt as Luther felt when he lifted his hand and cried out before the Diet, "Here I take my stand! I can do no other, so help me God!" They were no hot-headed schismatics, but *honest* men, who could not turn their backs upon their convictions, who could not abandon *principle*, but were determined to follow it whithersoever it should lead them.

3. They were consistent *Presbyterians*. They went out, but they took their Presbyterianism with them. One of the most lamentable religious tendencies of the present day is the tendency to separatism. Many who are dissatisfied with the Church cut themselves off from all the advantages of ecclesiastical organisation. The founders of this congregation valued Presbyterian order. They would not shake themselves free from what they regarded as New Testament jurisdiction. They would not dispense with a trained ministry, which they felt to be necessary to their edification. And even before they had the clear prospect of a settled ministry, they had elders ordained over them, whose names head the long and honourable Session roll of the congregation. They waited long and loyally before even this privilege was granted to them, and maintained ordinances with great difficulty till the Presbytery saw its

way to grant regular supply. As Seceders they remained staunch Presbyterians, and even in their separation their motto might be said to be, "For Christ and the Church."

4. And they were men of *prudence*. Their faith did not make them foolhardy. They laid their plans with circumspection, and did not act till they knew that the people were with them. It would perhaps be too much to say that they were out-and-out voluntaries, but they had sufficient wisdom to lead them to grope in the direction in which their Church has gone. They were convinced, at least, that there was nothing wrong in a congregation paying its way; they were heartily willing to bear their share of the new burden, and they were satisfied that the people were with them in their enterprise, and that they were acting in their spiritual interest. And they were not mistaken, for the people promptly accepted their leadership, and so we are here to-day. We have no reason to regret, nor has the community reason to regret, nor has our friends of the Establishment reason to regret, that William Scott called together that little company of good men and true, and wrote out upon his kitchen table that petition to the Presbytery which was the first step in the formation of this congregation.

Mr Pollock concluded by again referring to the hope that the congregation's future might be worthy of its past. This could not fail to be, if the same spirit which moved its founders continued to animate their followers. Let them be faithful to themselves, and to the principles which had been bequeathed to them, and had made their Church great, and the God of their fathers would be their God, and bless them more and more abundantly in the new century of congregational life upon which He had privileged them to enter.

The Chairman introduced Mr Sloan, as one of the representatives of Cupar Presbytery.

Mr Sloan took upon him to convey the congratulations of Cupar Presbytery to the congregation of Freuchie on the attainment of that stage in their history which they had met to celebrate that day. The Presbytery rejoiced with them, and witnessed their departure on a new era of their progress with every encouragement and every good wish. He also expressed the felicitations and greetings of the congregation of St Andrews.

He then went on to speak of the advantages of such commemorative celebrations. They gave the members of the church an opportunity of reviewing their history, of recalling the noble sacrifices for principle, the steadfast adherence to conviction, and the many proud traditions which characterise it. Nothing was more instructive, stimulating, or inspiriting than a study of the past.

A retrospect enabled them to see many occasions for devout gratitude to God. The Divine guidance and protection had been vouchsafed to them, and it was because of that they should recognise the Hand by which they had been led, and to remember with gratitude the source of the loving-kindnesses which have marked our Church's history.

A retrospect enabled them to review their principles. Among the rising generation there was a good deal of ignorance regarding the positions of the different churches. Many could not tell in what respect one differed from another. This was not as it should be. It was, therefore, good for them to recall the circumstances in which their Church had its origin, and to consider the principles which it represented, and for which it had contended. There was a so-called charity at the present day which sought out the good in personages and parties in the past that we have been accustomed regarding with condemnation, and endeavoured to reveal them in a more favourable light; but, strange to say, this charity was somewhat

severe upon the Reformers, the Puritans, the Covenanters, and the Secession leaders, and described them as extremists, fanatics, and schismatics. It only needed an unbiased study of the past to show that, whatever their faults, they contended for liberty of conscience, and that much of the freedom we enjoy has been won through their noble efforts. Their contentions may seem to have been only about trifles, but in these trifles great principles were involved. We cannot review our history without coming face to face with these principles, and seeing that they are embedded in the very constitution of the several sections of the Scottish Church.

A retrospect enabled them to recognise God's educative influence in their ecclesiastical history. Their unhappy divisions all represented some particular aspect of truth and principle which God had taught them, and the Church as a whole was richer for the contributions of the various elements which entered into its composition. Let them look at the United Presbyterian Church. It was characterised by its voluntary principle, its liberality, its catholicity, its great interest in Christian missions. The Secession Fathers little knew to what the movement they initiated would grow. God led them out, and He led them on. They gave an object-lesson in time as to how a church with all its organisations could be maintained through the free-will offerings of the people, and how it could thrive and flourish apart from any dependence on the State. The Secession branch of the church showed an interest in missions, and in great philanthropic movements. They were on the side of humanity in advocating the emancipation of the slaves. It was by them that the first Scottish Presbyterian missionaries were ordained. They took over the missions of the Scottish Missionary Society. The Relief Church learned much the same lessons, but specially did

they represent that catholicity which is a feature of our Church. Gillespie was ready to hold communion with all who loved the Lord Jesus. When the United Secession and Relief Churches united in 1847 to form the United Presbyterian Church, they contributed to the united church the fruits of all that God had taught them in their separate histories.

A retrospect enabled them to see the love of union in the United Presbyterian Church. At first sight its history appears to be a history of schisms. The Secession Church had not existed for fifteen years before it was split up into sections—the Burghers and the Antiburghers. Later, when the Relief Church was formed, it formed a separate organisation, and did not see its way to throw in its lot with either of the existing Secessions. But a closer observation shows that the history of the Church is really a history of unions. As soon as the rock on which the Secession Church split was removed, the two Churches drew together in 1820, and formed the United Secession Church. Later, the United Secession and the Relief Churches, finding themselves in harmony in essentials, joined in 1847 to form the United Presbyterian Church. And again, in 1876, our Church showed itself the lover of union in making the great sacrifice of its congregations in England to form the Presbyterian Church of England. We may then justly claim for our Church that it is a lover of concord, and that it will be the first to welcome a union of the Presbyterian Churches in Scotland, as soon as such a union is practical. Mr Sloan concluded by urging the Freuchie congregation to prove themselves worthy of their noble history and inspiring traditions.

Messrs Milroy, Simmons, and Fraser also addressed the meeting, and each congratulated the congregation upon the attainment of its hundredth year, and expressed the hope

that God's favour and blessing would attend them in the future.

Throughout the proceedings the audience was very hearty and appreciative. This was specially noticeable at the close, when the Chairman requested the members to go forward with the printing of a centenary volume, and asked for their support. Would they answer by rising in their seats? A unanimous response was immediately given. The people were no sooner seated when Mr John Robertson of Glasgow, a native of Freuchie, rose in the audience, and intimated his intention of presenting a lamp to commemorate the centenary, which would be hung above the front door. Mr Robertson was heartily thanked by the Chairman in name of the congregation for his kind offer. (An inspection of the frontispiece will show the lamp in position above the front entrance. We must not omit to say that this is but one example of the generosity of Mr Robertson towards the congregation).

The meeting shortly afterwards dispersed, and we are sure all felt it to have been a most memorable occasion. And as if to impress the event more deeply upon every mind, it was followed that same evening by an incident which, happily, is rare in the annals of the village. While some of the audience were still in the church, the cry of "Fire" was heard. All hurried out, to find smoke issuing from the shop immediately beneath the house of Mr John Grant, chairman of the congregation. Willing hands soon contributed a plentiful supply of water, and the fire was got under before much damage had been done. Still, it was an alarming experience, and it seemed to all quite providential that the fire had occurred on that particular night, and had been discovered at that particular time. The centenary and the fire will always live together in the minds of the people.

We now come to the close of our history. Upon every page the "finger of God" has been writ large: upon the page containing its centenary record the congregation may well inscribe "Ebenezer,"—"Hitherto hath the Lord helped us." They have a past of which they need not be ashamed; we trust the future will be such as never to make our ancestors—those unseen witnesses—ashamed of us. We do rejoice that we have advanced so far and so well in our congregational history, but let not our boasting be of self. Let us rather echo the words of the Psalmist: "We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old. For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them; but *thy* right hand, and *thine* arm, and the light of *thy* countenance, because thou hadst a favour unto them."

APPENDICES.

A. ROLL OF SESSION

(In order of Ordination). * Present Members of Session.

Name	Ordained Place	Ordained Date	Inducted
1. David Birrell	Freuchie	Jan., 1796	
2. John Buck	,,	,,	
3. William Kay	,,	,,	
4. James Lillie	,,	,,	
5 Walter Lumsden	,,	,,	
6. John Richardson	,,	July, 1798	
7. James Roxburgh	,,	Oct. 20, 1799	
8. James Wishart	,,	,,	
9. John Marshall	,,	Aug. 6, 1809	
10. George Suttie	,,	,,	
11. Robert Blyth	...	...	June 14, 1821
12. John Bell	Freuchie	June 14, 1821	
13. James Lumsden	,,	,,	
14. John Buck	,,	June 16, 1830	
15. John Henderson	,,	,,	
16. David Marshall	,,	,,	
17. James Rae	,,	,,	
18. John Scott	,,	,,	
19. James Turner	,,	,,	
20. Thomas Laing	Auchtermuchty	Feb., 1835	April 9, 1876
21. John Gray	Freuchie	June 17, 1838	
22. John Morris	,,	May 4, 1840	
23. George Angus	,,	Mar. 10, 1845	
24. James Halkerston	,,	,,	
25. Thomas Lumsden	,,	,,	
26. Alexander Storrar	,,	Sept. 28, 1852	
27. James Ewan	..	...	Nov. 12, 1866
28. Andrew Thom	Buckhaven U.P.		,,
29. James Millar*	Falkland E.C.		Sept. 19, 1880
30. Wm. Meiklejohn*	Airth U.P.	Nov. 7, 1858	,,
31. James M'Intosh	Freuchie	Nov. 12, 1866	
32. Robert Grieve	,,	,,	
33. Andrew Marshall	Collessie F.C.	Oct. 3, 1869	Sept. 19, 1880
34. Robert Anderson	Freuchie	April 9, 1876	
35. George Braid*	,,	,,	
36. John Urquhart	,,	,,	
37. David Wilson	,,	,,	
38. John Pollock	,,	Jan. 7, 1880	
39. John Buck	,,	Sept. 19, 1880	
40. George Seth*	,,	,,	

ROLL OF SESSION—*Continued.*

Name	Ordained		Inducted
	Name	Place	
41. John Dick*	...	...	July 3, 1887
42. Thomas Blyth*	Kettle F.C.	Feb. 8, 1885	June 21, 1896
43. James Milroy	Freuchie	Jan. 6, 1886	
44. Allan Mill*	,,	July 3, 1887	
45. William Marshall	,,	Mar. 15, 1891	
46. William Troupe	,,	,,	
47. Chris. Storrar*	,,	,,	
48. George Lowe*	,,	Dec. 5, 1894	
49. Arthur Burt*	,,	June 21, 1896	
50. David Rymer*	,,	,,	

B. LIST OF MANAGERS

Who have held Office since the Building of the New Church, 1867.

† * George Adamson
David Adamson
‡ Archibald Aitken, jun.
Robert Anderson
‡ David Archibald
Henry Barclay
David Baxter
Robert Blyth
George Braid
† Thomas Braid
George Bruce
John Buck
‡ Arthur Burt
William Christie
* John Cuthbert
‡ James Dowie
Thomas Duncan
James Galloway
Thomas Gilmour
Alexander Gilmour
‡ John Grant
David Grant
James Grieve
James Haxton
William Haxton
* Robert Henry
* James Inches
David Law
* Robert Law
‡ John Law (1)
† John Law (2)
James Leishman
Robert Leishman
William Lindsay
Michael Lumsden
David Marshall
William Marshall
Andrew Marshall
‡ William Meiklejohn
John Muir
Alexander Murdoch
James Miller
‡ † Allan Mill
John Murdoch
Robert Morgan
James M'Donald
* James M'Intosh
William Ness
Walter Ness (1)
‡ Walter Ness (2)
Peter Nelson
James Petrie
‡ Andrew Pryde
Peter Reoch

LIST OF MANAGERS—*Continued.*

‡ James Robertson	‡ James Thom
* David Rymer (1)	David Trotter
‡ David Rymer (2)	John Urquhart
* James Scott	† John Watt
George Seth	‡ Hugh Watt
Andrew Simpson	Andrew Webster
Alexander Skinner	David Webster
Robert Smart	Andrew Williamson
Richard Storrar	David Wilson
† Christopher Storrar	John Wilson
William Swan	George Wilson
* Andrew Thom	

* Building Committee of New Church, along with Messrs Thomas Lumsden, George Gilmour, James Ewan, David Annan, Robert Braid.
† Trustees for Church and Manse Property.
‡ Present Managers.

C. A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

From Sir John Sinclair's *Statistical Account of Scotland*, 1792 edition, we learn the following facts:—"The population of the parish of Falkland was 2198—937 being in Falkland, 120 in Ballinblae, 193 in Newton, 476 in Freuchie, and 472 in the rest of the parish. There were 337 tradesmen in the parish, of whom 231 were weavers of 'a coarse kind of linen.'

"A complete tradesman will weave 400 spindles in the year, which, at 9d the spindle, *the highest price given*, is ...	£15	0	0
Deduct for winding 200 spindles of woof, at 1½d the spindle, ...	1	5	0
The weaver's wages are	£13	15	0"

The total wage of the weaver and his wife was thus only 5s 9d a week! The average wage of other tradesmen was less.

"The stipend is four chalders of bear, two chalders of

meal, and 600 merks. Besides, there is allowed for communion elements 100 merks, and in lieu of a manse and glebe only a chalder of bear." This means that the stipend amounted to £102, with £5 12s for expenses and £11 for house rent. Mr Richardson's stipend six years later, during which period no material change took place, was £60, with £5 for expenses and £5 for house rent. The Burgher congregations of West Calder, Maybole, and Stonehouse also called their first ministers in 1798. West Calder paid £70 without house or expenses, Maybole £60 with house, and Stonehouse £60 with house and garden. It thus appears that Freuchie was not far behind in point of stipend as compared both with the Established Church and the Secession.

"There is no house nor garden for the schoolmaster, in hiring of which his legal salary of £6 10s is nearly exhausted. The average number of his scholars is about 80, of whom the small proportion that read Latin and arithmetic pay only 2s 6d the quarter, and the English scholars 1s 6d." Suppose the "small proportion" to be 15, the schoolmaster's salary was £33 10s *without house*.

D. EXTRACTS FROM MR RICHARDSON'S WRITINGS.

"Mr Richardson's authorship, so far as we are aware, was confined to a few miscellaneous articles inserted in religious periodicals. He published two papers, having the signature 'Meditor,' in the *Christian Repository*—one on the 'Covenant of Works' in vōl. 1, and the other on the 'Progress of Divine Revelation' in vol. 4. His feelings having been much excited by the death and funeral of his

beloved friend, the Rev. David Telford of Buckhaven, who died in May, 1824, he wrote a paper on the occasion, subscribed J. R. F., which appeared in the fourth volume of the *Christian Monitor*. He also prepared several essays for the *Christian Instructor*, including 'Remarks on the Hopes of Christian Parents regarding their Deceased Children.' We are unable, however, to give a complete list of his contributions to that and other periodicals."—*Memoir*.

1. *Remarks on the "Covenant of Works."*

. . . Nor was the *goodness* of God less strikingly manifested in this most generous transaction. By the law of his nature man was certainly bound to perform to his God all the service of which he was capable without receiving any reward. His existence, his preservation, and the other comforts which he possessed as a rational creature, demanded this. But, in virtue of converting his law into a covenant, God graciously pledged himself that, if Adam would continue faithful, both he and his posterity should receive a great reward. If all Adam's posterity had been present when this covenant was made, can it be supposed that so much as one of them would have objected to it? "How great is His goodness."

This was a plan admirably calculated to secure at once the happiness of the whole human race. Had the happiness of each of them rested on his own personal obedience there was reason to fear that many of them, or the greater part of them, or perhaps even all of them, might have sinned. For if Adam, in the possession of matured intellect with the many powerful motives which lay before him to obedience, yielded to the temptation, what may we suppose would have been the fate of his sons had the enemy attacked them, as he certainly might, in early life, and in many respects less prepared to repel his attacks than their general father was. For God's entering into a covenant with Adam as the representative of his natural posterity, furnished him with the strongest possible *motives* to obedience. The motive to obey was strong, if obedience had only saved him from eternal misery. It was much stronger when it entitled him to a glorious and eternal reward. It was strong if his own fate only had been at issue; it was inconceivably

stronger when there was also at issue the fate of countless millions of his sons. When Adam looked forward to the end of time and beheld his immense family, a great multitude which no man could number; when he felt for each of them the tender affection of a father; when he knew that on his conduct their eternal misery or happiness depended, how strong the motive to be faithful, both to his God and his children! If motives could have rendered the obedience of Adam certain, was not the happiness of the human race secured? If the plan of the covenant made with Adam was now to be submitted to a man skilled in calculation, without his knowing what has been the result, would not he pronounce that it is almost certain that Adam, by his obedience, has secured the felicity of his whole race? . . .

2. *On the "Progress of Divine Revelation."*

. . . No true Christian can contemplate the present state of the Christian world without bathing his eyes in tears over the sad desolation of the temple of God upon earth. It is but a small space of the globe which Christianity covers. The nominal church of Christ is but small; but that church, small as it is, presents itself in a great number of divisions, some of which are not only materially different one from another, but inspired with such a degree of hostility that on different occasions they have willingly imbrued their hands each in the other's blood. Much of this spirit has passed away. It has melted and disappeared under the intense beams of Divine revelation; but as much of it yet remains as affords an irresistible, though melancholy proof, that the progress of Christianity not only over the world, but over the mind and heart of those who make a profession of it, is as yet incomplete. Every one of these churches (for so the divisions are called), imagines that she has approached nearer the infallible standard of truth than any other of them; but it is obvious that all, except one, must be mistaken, and it is very probable that *that* one, whatever may be her name, has not approached so near to it as she supposes. Among the many discoveries which have been made since the dawn of the Reformation, there is one important discovery which, though very obvious, has not been made, or, if made, has never yet been sufficiently acted upon, viz., That the most perfect creed which ever was composed by human wisdom is still imperfect, and that the church should never desist from wise and prudent attempts to reform it. The absence of this discovery, or at least our not having it always sufficiently under our eye, has greatly

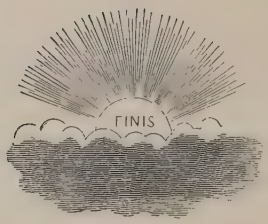
retarded the progress of our discovery in Divine revelation. Can anything be more presumptuous than to suppose that any of us have attained to a complete understanding of all that is contained in the Word of God? There are some human compositions which are truly admirable, and much are we indebted to those worthy men who have composed them; but we are much deceived if we think that any of them is exempted from error, or exhibits even what is all important in the Word of God. In that blessed Book, which came down from heaven, there is a perfection and a glory which no human eye has ever seen. There are principles which have never been understood or embraced by any church. There is a spirit which has never yet been fully breathed by any Christian. Looking at any human composition, let us never sit down and congratulate ourselves that our work is done, or that we have arrived at perfection. Experience has convinced us that this is a hasty conclusion. There are no errors in the Word of God; but if we are only men, there must be not a few errors in our interpretations of it; and there may be, there certainly are, many important truths which have not yet been discovered by any inquirer.* . . .

3. *Reflections on returning from the Funeral of a Minister lately deceased (Rev. David Telford, Buckhaven).*

This has been a day which will be long remembered in this part of the country. By the time that we reached the brow of the bank which overhangs the manse, retired from the village, a multitude of people was collected before it. We soon mixed with them; and whether it was from the pressure on our spirits, or from the sadness which rested on them, we imagined that we had never seen grief so strongly marked on so many faces at the same time. The greater part of the inhabitants of B—— are fishermen, and very active and diligent in their calling; but not a fisherman would put a boat to sea, unfurl a sail, or handle an oar while the sacred dust of their beloved pastor lay unburied on the shore. . . Many faces were streaming with tears, and some covered their eyes to conceal a sight which they could hardly endure. Having reached E—— W——, the place of interment, a scene somewhat similar presented itself, but with some degree of diminished interest. We now arrived at the spot where we were to deposit the dust of our

* In breadth of view and large-minded charitableness, these lines exhibit a spirit far in advance of that existing in the writer's own day; indeed, there are some places in Scotland *to-day* where they might be read with profit.

friend, to rest till the morning of a glorious resurrection. When the coffin was laid in the grave, the cords dropt, and the falling mould emitted from the tomb a hollow sound, active fancy imagined that she heard a voice from within, not unlike to his whose voice we shall hear no more, saying :—"Farewell, my dear and affectionate friends. Happy have I often been in your society, if it may be called happiness which is enjoyed on earth. We often talked together about death, often we anticipated the solemn coming hour. It has come at last! . . . I lie down in the grave with much more pleasure than ever I laid myself down on my bed after the labours of a Sacramental Sabbath. . . . It is but a little that I have gone before you. In a short time you all shall follow me, and it will always bring a new accession to my joy, when, one after another, I meet and embrace you before the throne!"



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